Surf the Net with the Sci-Fi Channel on-line in *The Dominion* and on-air with *C-Net Central.*

BY JOHN P. L. KELLY

IF YOU ARE ONE OF THE MILLIONS of people worldwide who hang ten on the Internet, here's your chance to surf with Sci-Fi! The Sci-Fi Channel has created *The Dominion*, a brand-new, comprehensive site on the World Wide Web. It's your door into the world of science fiction on the net, where information can be put up, downloaded, recycled, consumed, transformed and refueled.

The Dominion is more than just a computer database; it is an interactive universe of science fiction information. On *The Dominion* home page, a graphic interface provides access to eight zones—including a launch site devoted to other points of interest for science fiction fans throughout the Internet. Among the varied features of *The Dominion* will be complete information on the Sci-Fi Channel and its programming; downloadable science fiction photos, video and even audio clips; the exclusive opportunity to order Sci-Fi Channel merchandise; numerous bulletin boards; and a feedback area where users may communicate with the Sci-Fi Channel and science fiction fans on the Internet.



It is difficult to choose which zone to devour first. The menu of The Dominion *caters to voracious science fiction appetites. Enjoy the feast.*

Catering to the science fiction heads' every need, the continually evolving zones of *The Dominion* include:

- "The Edge"—Provides information on Sci-Fi Channel programming, including areas showcasing specific programs such as *The Twilight Zone*; the Sci-Fi Channel schedule; special programming events and theme weeks.
- "Pulp"—An electronic newsstand providing excerpts and reviews of science fiction books, magazine and newspaper articles, plus special insights from *Sci-Fi Entertainment*.
- "B.board"—A bulletin board for Net communications between fans, and info on upcoming science fiction events, conventions and more.
- "Orbit"—Official launch site to other science fiction areas on the Net.
- "FreeZone"—A place to view and access graphics, and download photos of science fiction personalities, computer graphics art, video and audio clips.
- "Trader"—Provides exclusive Sci-Fi Channel merchandise offers.
- "Feedback"—Your oeadquarters for letters to the Sci-Fi Channel.
- "Sci-Fi Channel"—Highlights of Sci-Fi Channel originals like *FTL Newsfeed*, *Inside Space* and *Sci-Fi Buzz*.

The Sci-Fi Channel's goal is that *The Dominion* will "become *the* ultimate home for science fiction on the Internet," according to Ellen Kaye, vice president of advertising and promotion for USA Networks. "The Sci-Fi Channel is a conceptual network mandated to entertain and introduce its viewers to new technologies, so by definition it belongs on the Internet. *The Dominion* will remain true to the ideals of the Internet by offering free access to all science fiction information."

Don't be left behind! Enter *The Dominion*. Internet address: http://www.scifi.com

After you access the world of high-tech on-line, check it out on-air—on *C-Net Central*, a brand-new, weekly original series airing on the Sci-Fi Channel. *C-Net Central* is the cyberspace love child of the computer *and* television, and not since Elliot touched fingers with E.T. has there been such a vital union. Each week, your award-winning host, Richard Hart, provides a graphic relief map for the information superhighway.

Kevin Wendle, president of C-Net: The Computer Network, producers of *C-Net Central* for Sci-Fi, understands the power and importance of the computer and its ramifications on individuals' daily lives. Wendle feels that technology has arrived at the point where the melding of the forces of television and computers is a natural. "Computers, combined with graphics, audio and video," says Wendle, "really opens things up."

C-Net Central provides a thirty-minute look at tomorrow's technology today in a magazine show format that entertains *and* educates. Wendle reports that since the *C-Net Central* audience will come to the program with

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Internet users go digging for sci-fi treasures in cyberspace.

BY JEFFREY FRENTZEN

ARMED WITH A COMPUTER AND MODEM, science fiction devotees are flocking to the electronic realm called the Internet, to discover an on-line community that shares the latest SF news, critiques the new TV shows, and exchanges correspondence with friends around the world. On the Internet, people who are geographically and culturally apart interact as though they were next-door neighbors; the barriers of the physical world vanish, replaced by streams of data bouncing around a worldwide computer network.

Internet users can also access enormous repositories of facts, figures, and software, and create personalized on-line documents that anyone can access and peruse.



Examples of science fiction on the World Wide Web: Universal's Earth 2 *site and Mel's* Godzilla *site.*

And you'll find a lot of virtual nooks and crannies that appeal to science fiction fans.

The Sci-Fi Channel has set up a storefront on the Internet, on the World Wide Web (Web), which is a type of Internet service that quickly delivers formatted text and graphics to your computer. Sci-Fi Channel's Web site, called The Dominion, is representative of the hundreds of other sites throughout the Internet. You can negotiate a series of hypertext-based "pages" to access information which is conveniently arranged in a context-sensitive manner. These Web pages contain hypertext "links," some of which may lead you halfway around the globe to other relevant Internet sites. Web "browsers"—programs you need to access and download this material from the Internet to your computer—are available for most computer operating systems, including Unix, DOS, Windows, and the Macintosh. IBM's OS/2 operating system comes with a built-in Web browser. Using a browser, you click on a Web page's hypertext link using a mouse, and data relevant to that link is automatically sent to your computer.



The best Web sites are structured in the style of a hierarchical outline, with text, graphics, highlighted hypertext links and, sometimes, audio clips, videos, and interactive discussion areas; a few of these sites even contain "virtual reality rooms," where individuals enter and converse with one another.

On The Dominion, for example, you can negotiate hypertext pages filled with Sci-Fi Channel news, TV listings, a discussion forum where you can leave public messages, and even fan convention announcements. After connecting to the Internet, command your browser to access Web sites using an Internet addressing syntax called a Uniform Resource Locator (URL). A URL points to a specific computer system on the Internet that contains the Web site you're looking for. The URL for The Dominion, for instance, is http://www.scifi.com.

This cyber-jargon takes a while to get used to, but seasoned "net surfers" learn to save commonly accessed URLs in "bookmark" files that the browser interprets automatically. I will use this syntax liberally to let you know where to surf for the best SF sites on the Internet.

Of the many electronic alleyways open to the SF enthusiast, *Star Trek*-related sites are legion. Paramount Pictures maintains a regularly updated Web site devoted to all of its *Star Trek* franchises. You can now "Point" your browser at http://startrek.paramount.com/ and find episode guides, pictures, contests, and trivia.

How can you take part in this cyberspace revolution? Started over thirty years ago by the U.S. military as a last-resort communication channel in case of nuclear war, the Internet has grown into a meeting place for anyone with enough dough for a computer, modem, and a monthly account with a local Internet-access provider. Established providers are listed in your local yellow pages. People with access to commercial on-line services are gaining the ability to access the World Wide

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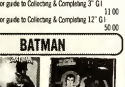


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Web, too—Prodigy and CompuServe already give their customers access, and America Online will later this year.

Once you're on the Web, where to go? The Internet is vast and amorphous, and rather disorganized. With no central administrator, no single place that lists all Internet sites, you're left somewhat on your own to find things. In recent months, a few reliable services have popped up to help you navigate the Web. "Yahoo," a page maintained by cybernauts at Stanford University (http://akebono.stanford.edu), is a good place to start. You can search Yahoo's vast repository of Internet site lists by keyword.

For example, a Yahoo search for *Star Trek* yielded not only Paramount's official site, but a jaw-dropping list of sites maintained by fans. A good place to start might be the *Star Trek* Archive, which offers various lists, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) files, and technical data concerning the *Star Trek* universe and the ideas behind it. It's at http://www.ee.umanitoba.ca/djc/startrek.

The *Star Trek* Viewing Guide (http://wc62.residence.gatech.edu/TV/StarTrek/), provides an episode-by-episode listing, including cast, writers, directors, ships, and planets visited by the *Enterprise*.

The British Starfleet Confederacy (http://deepthought.armory.com/bsc/) describes itself as "a nonprofit organization run by the fans of *Star Trek* for other fans." Another on-line fan club, the Continuum, resides at the University of Michigan—from here you can jump to other similar sites. Index *Star Trek* DCU also provides links to numerous *Star Trek* havens. Other such sites include the *Star Trek* Resources on the Internet page (http://www.cosy.sbg.ac.at/rec/startrek/star_trek_resou rces.html) and *Star Trek* Points of Internet (http://www.crc.ricoh.com/marcush/startrek.html).

On the lighter side, the Borg Page (located at http://www.cs.indiana.edu/hyplan/awoodlri/borg/borg.htm l) is a humorous, close-up look at the Federation's sworn enemy; the site's creators claim that it will soon assimilate all other Web sites. At http://www.hyperion.com/koreth/particles/, you'll find an exhaustive but amusing catalog of *Star Trek*'s often unbelievable extraterrestrial particles-of-the-week. An enterprising fan has dedicated a site to Lieutenant Worf; point your browser at http://ussenterprise. async.vt.edu/enterprise/index.html to get a personal view of the noble Klingon. You'll find a site dedicated to Gene Roddenberry http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/ werdna/sttng/gene.html.

One of the more interactive sides of Internet, called Internet Relay Chat (IRC), is a real-time conferencing system in which users chat with each other in a text-based environment. The *Star Trek* channel is called #Star Trek. You can't access IRC using a Web browser; you need an IRC program, which is available for most operating systems.

Fans of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* will be happy to find an index of all the episodes (http://chaplin.cc.tut.fi/~pekka/), and more DS9 sites at http://www.ee.surrey.ac.uk/Personal/STDS9/Head.html and at http://trill.pc.cc.cmu.edu/~jkoga/stds9_gallery.html; the latter calls itself *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* Central. There's even a site devoted to Miles O'Brien (http://www.astro.umd.edu/sgeier/obrien.html), and there is a Terry Farrell Internet Fan Club, at http://trill.pc.cc.cmu.edu:80/~jkoga/tf.html.

The Web is only one avenue to the Internet. Usenet newsgroups—discussion forums that are broken up into over 6,000 interest areas—is a bulletin-board style outlet for researchers and enthusiasts looking for others with similar pursuits, as well as training grounds for those new to the Internet ("newbies"), and an experiment in free speech for countless ranters and flamers (to flame is to make another Usenet denizen the target of electronic yells, curses, and screams). "Alt" forums are unmoderated; the others are often moderated by one or more experts who must approve postings before they will appear on the Net. All are free from the constraints of censorship, unlike most of the commercial on-line services.

Here's a selection of what's being served on Usenet for science fiction junkies:

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Aliens	Frankenstein Bride	Pinhead
Alien 3	Godzilla	Pumpkin Head
Arrow	Ghoul Double Pack	Return of the Jedi
Applause PVC	Ghoul Busters	Robin Hood
Back to the Future	Ghoul Busters II	Robo Cop
Batman	Ghoul Busters III	Robo Cop II
Batman Collection	Halloween	Robo Cop III
Beetlejuice	Halloween II	Roger Rabbit
Bowie & The Beast	Hamilton Dolls	Rocketeer
Brave & Bulldog	Hellraiser	Rocky & Bullwinkle
Bride of Frankenstein	Hellraiser II	Sesame Street
Bride of Chucky	Honey Monsters	Sesame Street PVC
Bill & Ted's	Horror Series	Simpsons
Bruce Lee	Hulk	Spawn
Burn Witches	Indiana Jones	Spiderman
Captain America	Indiana Jones	Spiderman II
Captain Planet	James Bond	Star Trek
Carlton Power	Jason	Star Trek PVC
Cereal Premiums	Jetsons	Super Joe Outfits
Chamber Series	Jurassic Park	Super Mario
Child's Play	Land Of The Lost	Swamp Thing
Chuck Norris	Lethal Weapon	Swamp Thing II
Chucky Dolls	Liberty Statue	Terminator
Comic Books	Marvel	Terminator II
Cowboys	Mask	Universal Monsters
Count Chocula	Mini Brothers	Wizard of Oz
Count Dracula	Mummy	Wizard of Wonder
Count Frankenstein	Mr. Bill Monsters	Wolfman
Crash Bandicoots	McDonald's	Wrestling
Dark Knight	Monsters	Wrestling Dolls
Dark Page	Mutant Jackson	Wrestling Monsters
Disney PVC	Monsters	Wrestling Masks
Dukes of Hazzard	Mystical Before Xmas	Where's Waldo
Elvis	Nun Series	WCW
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- 1 Pair Goggles
- 1 Pair Sunglasses
- 1 Pair Binoculars
- 1 Pair Knife
- 1 Pair Sheath Knife
- 1 Pair Machine Gun
- 1 Pair Pistol
- 1 Pair Shoulder Guards
- 1 Pair Elbow Guards
- 1 Pair Knee Guards
- 1 Pair Shin Guards
- 1 Pair Boots
- 1 Pair Gloves
- 1 Pair Sunglasses
- 1 Pair Binoculars
- 1 Pair Knife
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- 1 Pair Binoculars
- 1 Pair Knife
- 1 Pair Sheath Knife
- 1 Pair Machine Gun
- 1 Pair Pistol
- 1 Pair Shoulder Guards
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rec.arts.sf—A hierarchy of newsgroups for science fiction lovers, including sections on literature, fandom, the writer's marketplace, movies, and *Star Wars*.

alt.fan.q — For fans of Q from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

rec.arts.startrek.tech — Discussions of *Star Trek*'s depiction of future technologies

alt.sex.fetish.startrek — Illogical yet fascinating *Star Trek* lust.

In addition to the overwhelming number of *Star Trek* cubbyholes on the Internet, other literary and media-related subjects are talked about. The best Web-based SF resources can be found at the Lysator archives in Sweden (http://sf. www.lysator.liu.se/); Nearnet's Oracle newsgroup archive (check out http://nea rne t.gnn.com/wic/sci-fi.05.html); and the SF-Lovers resource guide (http://sundry.hsc.usc.edu/hazel/www/sf-resource.guide .html).

Also, numerous on-line bookstores and libraries cater to the literary crowd. Your first stop on this quest should be John Leavitt's on-line book publishers and retailers site, at http://www.cs.cmu.edu:8001/afs/cs/user/jrrl/www/bookstо res.html. The ultimate index of electronic library sites is maintained by the WWW Virtual Library, available at http://info.cern.ch/hypertext/DataSources/ bySubject/Overview.html.

Science fiction and fantasy authors are represented on the Internet as well. Look for sites devoted to Robert Heinlein, Spider Robinson, Anne McCaffrey, and others. For the Cthulhu-obsessed, visit the H.P. Lovecraft Web site at http://elmer- fudd.cs.berkeley.edu/people/davesimp/lovecraft/lovecraf t.html. In addition, the works of Frank Herbert and Douglas Adams are discussed on Usenet newsgroups alt.fan.douglas-adams and alt.fan.dune.

On the pop-culture front, *anime* and *manga* fans should make a stop at Tom Fine's list of *anime*-related FAQs at Ohio State University (http://www.cis.ohio- state.edu/hypertext/faq/usenet/anime/top.html. These FAQs will point you in the direction of many other on-line Japanimation resources.

I've not even touched on the amount of movie- related information on the Internet, but I use three resources all the time—Stewart Clamen's movie-review query engine (http://byron.sp.cs.cmu.edu:9086/movie) and Mark Leone's movie information site (http://www.cs.cmu.edu:8001/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mleone/web/movies.html) are good launching pads; however, the amazing Cardiff, UK hypertext movie database, which is mirrored in the U.S. at http://www.msstate.edu/Movies/, eclipses all other sources. This on-line movie guide provides an easy-to-use search facility to find directors, actors, release dates, running times, and other movie data. You can rate the movies, too, and add new entries in the database. Although maintained by Englishman Robert Hartill, the Cardiff database is a group effort by many fans and researchers. Keep in mind, though, the Cardiff database is not complete and not always accurate.

As for television, I was surprised by the number of sites devoted to non-*Star Trek* SF TV. Most of these sites contain show guides, pictures, actors' biographies, detailed behind-the-scenes information, digitized sounds, and even movie clips. A solid *Babylon 5* page is at http://www.astro.nwu.edu/lentz/sci-fi/ b5/home-b5.html; "The Lurker's Guide to *Babylon 5*" (http://www.hyperion.com/ lurk/lurker.h tml) is also worth a look. *Battlestar Galactica* fans should feed their browsers http://www.carleton.edu/BG/ for more information about Universal's Cylon-bashers. Universal is on the Web, with a *SeaQuest* site at http://www.mca.com/tv/seaquest/. One of the best sites of this type is *The X-Files* site, available at http:/ /www.rutgers.edu/ x-files.html. *Red Dwarf* fans should examine the site at http://ww w.hal.com/markg/docs/ RedDwarf/rd- home_page.html.

For information about other TV-related Internet sites and newsgroups, check out Yahoo's science fiction TV index, at http://akebono.stanford.edu/yahoo/Entertainment/Televis ion/Shows/Science_Fiction/.□

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Virtual Hollywood, and why Koontz hates *Hideaway.*

BY ROBERT MARTIN

WHEN IT COMES TO VIRTUAL REALITY, I offer just a few words of advice: *believe the hype.* The Disney Company has an attraction brewing that puts you in the driver's seat of a flying carpet, taking the role of Aladdin in search of a magic lamp. I'm one of the lucky few to have entered this fantastical cartoon world, thanks to a barely hyped exhibition in a quiet little corner of Disney World in Orlando, Florida; and I can say that, if you thought it was cool when that guy in *Roger Rabbit* entered "Toontown," this thing will totally blow you away.

Set up as a research project to subject a small part of the work-in-progress to play-testing (and stimulate word-of-mouth among park visitors), the Imagineering Lab at Epcot Center currently has four VR stations set up, allowing only a small number of park visitors to have the unique experience of floating about the city of Agrabah. Dan Snoddy, head of creative development for DisneyVision, Disney's new VR division, explains that "The capacity is small, so we keep it very low-key, not structured in a way that invites repeat business.



The voyager guides his trip by manipulating the front edge of the carpet with his four-fingered hand.

"It's a research project more than anything else, and we don't want to oversell it as an attraction—we're just inviting people to come join us and, in the spirit of research, help us out a little bit. But when we roll out with a big sign in front, we want to offer a much deeper, broader experience, something that you might want to come back to seven or eight times before you've explored it enough to do all the things that you set out to do. We're working on a giant expansion of the database. Right now we have a little town; a few streets, a palace, a desert...there will be twelve more parts to it of equal complexity, and several smaller subworlds of somewhat lesser complexity, all connected by tunnels and various flightways."

Though the current plan is to debut the Aladdin VR experience as a park attraction, with dozens of VR stations, these plans are not written in stone; it may happen that the experience will debut as a park attraction but be more widely available sometime thereafter, perhaps at VR centers across the country, or even delivered to homes via the broadband networks of the future. Snoddy is reluctant to confirm any Disney plans in that direction, however. "I spoke at a conference recently," he says, "and somebody came up and asked me, 'tell me what you're going to be doing in five years.' The fact is, things in this business are changing so fast, sometimes it's impossible to predict in the morning what you'll be doing in the afternoon. You make guesses about long-term and medium-term plans. What I think is important is to try something and get it out in front of people and see what they do with it. One thing we don't know is what the market for this will be like when it's fully ready for the public."

In the meantime, Snoddy's crew are working on the assumption that the completed work will be presented as a park attraction. "The primary motivation for the 'viewer' of the completed virtual experience will be to find the lamp. The idea is that people will come back with a plan, thinking 'the last time, that guard fooled me, sent me down that alley, and I got arrested—this time I know better...' In the search for the lamp, you'll find all sorts of other things that'll be pretty neat, but finding the lamp will be the high point of the experience, with the biggest payoff.



"Because it's interactive and non-linear, the way we write the script, if script is even the right word, is very different from, for instance, a movie's screenplay. We start out on paper, then build a rough, fast version into the world and use it; then we go back to paper and continue to go back and forth, so it's a reiterative process that evolves into the completed adven-

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ture. As we proceed, we're embedding more and more intelligence into the characters, so that you won't be competing with a computer—you're really competing with the guys who designed the characters.

One thing very noticeable to this voyager was the fantastic use of dimensional sound, as well as high-resolution images, to create a sense of place. "Sound is really important to the total experience," Snoddy agrees. "Initial research indicated to the Imagineering staff that monophonic sound works against the immersive experience. When you're in a room where there's five different people and objects, each making a distinctive sound, if all five sounds are in the center of your head, it disrupts the way you normally keep track of your location within a space. So we've put extensive work into the localization in 3-D space of each sound attached to each object in the experience; within an 'ambience bed' of background sound, each sound effect is sourced from a specific horizontal and vertical 'address' within virtual space, so that not only movement, but simply turning your head can create a new orientation within the sound-space." Of the 1,000 megabytes of data that comprise the experience, about 100 megs are devoted to sound data.

Currently, Imagineers are playing with "simultaneous presence" of two and more people, interacting with one another within cyberspace, but it seems unlikely that this will be a permanent addition to the Aladdin attraction. "One problem with that is that when you add the presence of other people within the same virtual space, you want that aspect to be integrated into the experience, rather than just grafted on. And that creates more of a problem in creating a storyline, as opposed to an experience that is you and these characters. If you're at one end of the world and I'm at the other, how do you develop a crisis situation or plot-point that is perceived by both of us?"

By working with Silicon Graphics, a leading supplier of computer workstations for computer graphics generation, Disney's crew has been helping the computer maker to create future generations of hardware and software tools that will make the creation of virtual worlds easier and faster in the future.

In the meantime, Disney is making a heavy investment in bringing the Aladdin product to market; but Disney is not unwise with a dollar, and it seems likely that this piece of "virtual real estate" will bring profits to the company for years. "When you look at Disneyland, it's the same place that it ever was, but we've found ourselves able to make it always fresh by taking this out, adding a new attraction...maybe the Aladdin database will be similar, it may be that we'll add other things that will be linked to it in the future. We'll just have to see."

Meanwhile, over in Studio City, Universal Studios is going virtual via its involvement with Enter Television, Inc., a firm claiming that it now has the technology to transform


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online services and the Internet into a fish-bowl version of virtual reality.

Enter Television's CD-ROM-based software, scheduled for release early in 1996, will allow computer users to generate visual representations of themselves to navigate cyberspace, and to interact with other users, both chatting (the software allows fast compression and transmission of voice data) and playing graphical 3-D games. Enter Television calls the user-icons "avatars," a term borrowed from Neal Stephenson's must-read V.R. novel *Snow Crash*. In exchange for its share of the company, Universal has agreed to lend its movie properties and characters, as well as its show biz expertise, in the development of little worlds for the avatars to inhabit and explore.

When Brett Leonard took us on our first cinematic V.R. trip in *Lawnmower Man*, you may recall that Stephen King didn't much care for the ride; Leonard had tossed aside the plot of his short story, even though the film was widely promoted as "Stephen King's" *Lawnmower Man*. Well, it's happened all over again. It seems that Dean Koontz is very upset that Leonard's most recent film, *Hideaway*, based on Koontz's novel (according to the credits), betrayed its source material. In letters to Tristar executives that he released to the Hollywood trade papers, Koontz says that he was promised by Tristar that his work would be treated as "an A-level thriller," with "no involvement of people with horror film experience." Koontz was particularly upset with the final polish of the script by director Leonard.

"This script has a viewpoint that is the antithesis of everything my work stands for," Koontz added, "and is offensive when it is not simply boring...audiences will be blinking so fiercely in befuddlement that the combined activity of their eyelashes will create a dangerous wind...this version seems to have been written by someone who is no more a writer than Jeffery Dahmer is a gourmet chef."

Leonard, meanwhile, is in postproduction on his next film, which is not based on anybody's book. Paramount's *Virtuosity*, from an original screenplay by Eric Bernt, stars Denzel Washington as Parker Barnes, an ex-cop with a tortured past, who must hunt down a murderous computer-generated personality in a headlong chase that breaks the barriers between virtual reality and the real world of Los Angeles 1999. Kelly Lynch (*Drugstore Cowboy*) plays Dr. Madison Carter, a specialist in criminal behavior who joins in the hunt. Russell Crowe (*Romper Stomper, The Quick and the Dead*) brings his evil charisma to the role of Sid 6.7, the berzerker from cyberspace. The film should be ready for release in early fall.

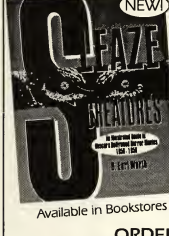
Terry Gilliam, whose past triumphs include *Brazil*, *Time Bandits*, and *Baron Munchausen*, has taken over the city of Philadelphia to film *Twelve Monkeys*, starring Bruce Willis, Madeleine Stowe, Brad Pitt and Christopher Plummer. The story, inspired by the 1962 experimental science fiction short *La Jeteé*, concerns a time traveler (Bruce Willis) whose mission to save Earth from destruction is unclear even to himself, because his journey has fragmented and jumbled his memories of past and future. Taken for a madman, he struggles to save Earth's future by unravelling his own past. The screenplay is by David Peoples (*Blade Runner, The Unforgiven*) and Janet Peoples.

Dreamworks SKG, the new studio born of the alliance between Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen, has amassed $2 billion in investment and bank guarantees, and reportedly has three projects in the works for release in 1996 and five for 1997; its first animated film will be one of seven projects scheduled for 1998 release; HBO has signed a ten-year deal for pay-TV rights to the new studio's product. Dreamworks will also be launching a record label, and has announced a commitment of $75 million in initial investment for an "interactive entertainment" division.

Michael (*Congo*, *Jurassic Park*) Crichton's 1987 novel *Sphere* has just been acquired by Warner Brothers, with Barry Levinson possibly directing. In *Sphere*, scientists explore an alien spaceship found deep underwater. The scientists become stranded in their underwater habitat as the sphere begins to work on their minds. Crichton himself is currently finishing the book sequel to *Jurassic*

Continued on page 27

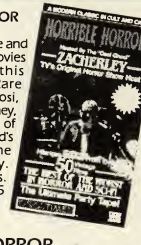
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When Lucas rereleases the first film in the Star Wars *trilogy, he plans to include a scene with Han and Jabba (seen here in the third film), originally edited out because of dissatisfaction with Jabba's appearance. Lucas plans to enhance Jabba using the latest digital technology.*

Park, already scheduled to be filmed by Spielberg as soon as next year.

Star Wars old and new: George Lucas has clarified the schedule for his end-of-century *Star Wars* plans. The worldwide theatrical release of the *Star Wars Special Edition* is now planned for February of 1997, and will include about four minutes of previously unreleased footage, new digital effects and enhancement throughout, and soundtrack digitally remastered in THX stereo. The only new scene announced to the public is Han Solo's confrontation with Jabba the Hutt, filmed in 1976 but omitted due to Lucas's dissatisfaction with Jabba's looks. The new version will have young Harrison Ford interact with a digitally enhanced Hutt. Contrary to previous reports, announced plans refer to revision of the first *Star Wars* film only, with no word on similar treatment for the second and third films of the trilogy.

In a statement released when Fox officially announced the project, Lucas said that "the digital technology that ILM pioneered in films like *Jurassic Park* and *Forrest Gump* allows me to revise a few scenes which bring the movie closer to my original version."

Lucas approached Fox with the idea of a re-release of a spruced up *Star Wars* two years ago, as a means to celebrate the film's 20th anniversary. It was while gearing up for the revised film that Lucas decided to proceed as well with the second series of three films that will comprise the "prequel" to *Star Wars*.

The first of the new films, *Star Wars Episode I*, will be set forty years prior to the time of the original *Star Wars* (A K A *Star Wars Episode IV*), and will focus upon Ben Kenobi's mentorship of Anakin Skywalker when the talented young pilot joins the ranks of the Jedi Warriors, and the Emperor's machinations that ultimately lead Skywalker to his seduction to the Dark Side of the force, and his transformation into Darth Vader, the Dark Lord of the Sith. Hey, we might even find out what a Sith *is*.

Lucas recently told *Hollywood Reporter*, "I'll take a year to write them, a year to prepare them, and a year to shoot them. And I'll shoot them all at once." Rumor has it that Lucas will direct at least one of the three films, and that *Shawshank Redemption*'s

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writer-director Frank Darabont, who is working on the script of the first film, may direct one as well.

The first of the new trilogy is targeted for theatrical release in 1998, 1999 at the latest.

Mel Brooks has signed Leslie Nielson for a starring role in *Dracula: Dead and Liking It;* John Woo (*Hard Target*) will direct Christian Slater in *Broken Arrow,* about a team of stealth bomber pilots who must retrieve a nuclear weapon from enemy territory. A few weeks after Jan De Bont (*Speed*) bailed out of the Tristar *Godzilla* project, he was signed by Spielberg to direct *Twister,* the script by Anne-Marie and Michael Crichton about daredevil scientists who fly into tornadoes to study them—a mammoth cooperative production between Warner Brothers and Universal. Arnold Schwarzenegger will star in *Eraser* for Warner Brothers, with Chuck Russell (*The Mask*) directing. The action picture concerns a Witness Protection Program agent who becomes embroiled in a conspiracy between the government and the mob. Arnie may then be starring in the remake of *Planet of the Apes.*

Disney's *Pocahontas* will debut in New York's Central Park on June 10th, before an audience of 100,000 people. Four giant screens, each eight stories tall, will surround the thirteen acres of the park's "great lawn" area; special 70 mm prints will be struck especially for the event, and the sound system—with roughly five times the wattage of the typical rock concert set up—will power 150 speakers. Tickets were distributed for free on a first come, first served basis. Michael Eisner dubbed the event "a kind of family Woodstock."

Marvel Comics' *She Hulk* is in production as a pilot for CBS, and will compete for a position on the network's prime time schedule for fall. CBS has announced a ton of new Saturday morning shows; IBM's CD-ROM character, Hyperman, will come to the lineup in the fall. *The Adventures of Hyperman* will be an animated series detailing the H-man's comic adventures.... *The Mask, Dumb and Dumber,* and *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective,* will all be turned into Saturday morning cartoons, but none of them will have the voice of Jim Carrey, who is so busy making movies he barely has time to count his money.

We must close with a Model Citizenship Award to Barbra Streisand, who struck a blow for humankind recently, when NBC presented the broadcast debut of her film *Prince of Tides.* Streisand actually *called NBC during the broadcast to complain that the commercials were too loud,* demanding that the engineer lower the volume by two decibels. It was a Sunday night, so none of the NBC brass was around to authorize the change, but Streisand managed to convince the engineer on duty that she'd back him up if he got into trouble—and the adjustment was made. No matter what you think of her singing, her politics, or the fact that she's never made a genre movie, you've got to give her credit for this one. □

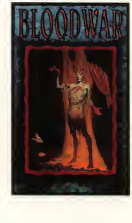


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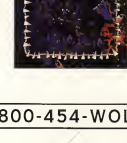
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WRITTEN BY DON BASSINGTHWAITE

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22ND CENTURY LAW

Judge Dredd—*Britain's sardonic take on crime and punishment, American style—translates to the Hollywood screen.*

BY DON E. PETERSON

"I AM THE LAW!" WAS THE CATCH PHRASE THAT SUMMARIZED the stance of Judge Dredd, the futuristic crime-fighter, when this character first appeared in the pages of *2000 AD*, a British comic magazine, in the 1970s. A mass market hit in Britain, the Judge never won more than a cult following among knowledgeable U.S. comics fans, but his influence has nevertheless been profound. In film, both *Robocop* and *Road Warrior* owe a clear debt to the chaotic vision of the future first put on paper by writer John Wagner and artist Carlos Ezquerra. In comics, *The Punisher* is only the most obvious instance of the Judge's brand of ruthless justice brought across the Atlantic.

With the opening of the major motion picture *Judge Dredd* on June thirtieth, millions of Americans will be meeting the Judge for the very first time, personified by one of our most enduring action stars, Sylvester Stallone. Like all big-budget filmmaking, this one is a crapshoot, with Hollywood backers hoping to make Dredd more popular than Lance Ito.

But matters of commercial success aside, the burning question for dyed-in-the-wool *Dredd* fans (some of whom are already critical of the DC Comics series that debuted earlier this year) is: Will this be the *real Judge Dredd*?

Our investigations show that while much of the mythos remains intact, it is the intention of the filmmakers to deliver something more than the straight-ahead hyperviolence of the comic book's action hero. "What we have is a powerful epic story about a man who has to discover a lot about what he's been defending all these years," says director Danny Cannon. "It's an incredibly complex story that's bold and rich. It's a science fiction action adventure, but it has enormous dimension, and I think it's a much bolder statement than when it was originally conceived."

Set in the year 2115 A.D. in Mega-City One, *Judge Dredd* takes place in a world where the criminal justice system has been completely "downsized"—replaced by a cadre of "judges," or legal-minded terminators, who bring order and ruthless efficiency to an unmanageable future world.

"The police are now in the position of being the governing body as well as the judicial and enforcement body of government," explains producer Charlie Lippincott. "It's set up in a situation where they now govern the population of the United States—so it's not a representative government anymore. They don't vote a police chief in or out anymore—the judges are the law."

Judge Dredd (Stallone) is in the top rank of these new hybrid lawmen, accustomed to his role as a living personification of rapid justice. In the film, conflict arises when the ruthless criminal mastermind Rico (Armand Assante) escapes from prison, as part of his plan to take over Mega-City

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Sylvester Stallone as the ultimate lawman, Judge Dredd.



The big guns of 22nd century law enforcement, Judge Dredd, Brisco (Alexis Daniel) and Hershey (Diane Lane.). OPPOSITE: The "ABC" robot, Rico's powerful companion in crime.

One, he must put an end to the career of the big town's number one cop.

"Basically, you have this Roman-esque fascist dictatorship, of which Dredd is very much the legendary icon," explains Cannon. "What we do is show the insidious corruption of this environment, which breaks Dredd down and banishes him. Then the story becomes about Dredd finding out why this happened and, in the process, finding out who he is and what he is and how he came to be." The film's main concern, says Cannon, is "how this 'justice machine' becomes very aware of his morality and his responsibilities to being human, rather than to the law."

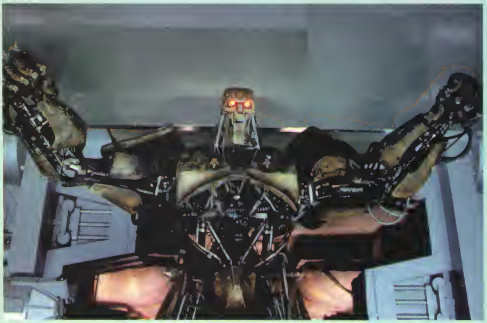
The film also stars Diane Lane as Judge Hershey, who remains dedicated to the law while still remaining loyal to Dredd, despite the circumstances her peer faces. *Saturday Night Live* cast member Rob Schneider (who also appeared with Stallone in *Demolition Man)*, plays Fergie, a cheap criminal who inadvertently becomes Dredd's ally and faithful sidekick. The cast is rounded out by Joan Chen, as the beautiful female antagonist Ilsa; Jurgen Prochnow (*In the Mouth of Madness*), as corrupt chief Judge Griffin; and veteran actor Max Von Sydow (*Flash Gordon*), as former chief Judge Fargo.

"I tried to give the film an international importance," says Cannon. "I was trying to be timeless while creating a classic scenario incorporating ideas concerning the Third Reich, certain pagan ideals, and even the Roman Empire. These things in the movie have really happened in our history."

Bringing science fiction in on a reasonable budget is a difficult endeavor nowadays, as Cannon was well aware when he first took the reins of *Judge Dredd*. "Obviously this film could have been the most expensive film ever made, but one thing I'm good for after making a lot of low budget stuff is that you respect money, you respect deadlines, and you put it on the screen," says Cannon. "So what could have been *Waterworld* is not. We knew what we needed to succeed and we're getting that, and luckily it hasn't gotten out of control."

Filmed over a ninety-eight-day shooting schedule last summer at London's Shepperton Film Studios, Cannon has assembled an impressive team of behind-the-scenes wizards to create the film's futuristic visuals. Production designer Nigel Phelps (he was Anton Furst's assistant on *Batman*) accompanies set decorator Peter Young (*Batman*), art director Leslie Thompson, and costume designer Emma Porteous (*Aliens*) in order to bring the Gothic, utopian Mega-City One environment to life. Joss Williams (*Alien 3*) serves as special effects supervisor and, Cannon says, his crew





has crafted some groundbreaking visuals that will even impress the buffs who think they've seen it all.

"I think we've got the biggest model city ever built—it's huge," says Cannon. "We're also digitally compositing live action onto our models, so you'll see real traffic and people inside our models, to make it a much more believable environment. We're also moving characters off of stage sets and into digital sets, sometimes within the same shots. What we're hopefully going for is that you won't notice that it's an effect at all. It will be so believably done that the minute you view the city itself, you will accept it as a natural environment."

While *Judge Dredd* has been the object of fan speculation for just over a year, the project has been on the drawing board for well over a decade. The comic property first roused Lippincott's interest during its years of peak popularity in the late '70s. Having marketed and merchandised *Star Wars*, Lippincott was well aware of the qualities that could make *Dredd* a science fiction franchise, and he began to pursue the rights, which he finally secured in 1984.

"Most studios weren't interested in science fiction and comic books, especially in those days,"explains Lippincott, who soon decided that his best shot at *Dredd* lay in pursuing the project as an independent feature.

"Since I had marketed a few science fiction films, I knew that, for the most part, the driving forces behind major science fiction films were individuals," he adds. "Just look at George Lucas and *Star Wars*. If you went to a studio, you would probably get lost in development, which I did not want. Just last year there were over 700 projects in development at Warner Bros. One project gets more attention over another depending on how hot you are at the moment, and unless you're a forceful producer with a hot track record or are a hot director or a hot actor, your project is not going to get the attention. You're going to get lost in the shuffle. And if you're in development with something and it goes on hold, it means you're going to have to go into turnaround and, if you still wish to see it made, you have to buy out the studio. So going with a studio usually makes it a major problem."

Through its first years, *Dredd* went through various incarnations, with at least five screenwriters taking a crack at the story. Meanwhile Lippincott had fluctuated back and forth on whether or not to go with an unknown or a name star in the lead role.

"There was another time when the film was close to going but then we ran into the problem of *Robocop*, which came out and was really loosely based on *Judge Dredd*," says Lippincott. "So it became evident that we couldn't come out and do *Dredd* because *Robocop* had already done the 'cop of the future' story really well. Besides, these things take time. *Batman* took forever to get made; and I actually worked on *Dick Tracy* before I worked on *Star Wars*. That's a shock to a lot of people—they had no idea that *Dick Tracy* had been around for that long."

Die-hard fans expressed some concern with the unmasking of Dredd.

After numerous false starts, *Judge Dredd* got into gear last year when Stallone was signed, and the actor approved the chosen director, 27-year-old Briton Danny Cannon, whose impressive debut feature had been *Young Americans*. "Most established directors don't want to do a project like this if they're any good," says Lippincott. "It's very tough to do and it takes a lot of energy and hard work. I felt Cannon was very good with the camera and, based on *Young Americans*, he seemed very good with the actors. He was well-rounded and that's very hard to find in one director."

It also helped that Cannon grew up with *Dredd*; while Lippincott was first attempting to launch the feature project, Cannon was a teen enjoying the original run of the Judge's adventures in the pages of *2000 AD*. "I was a great fan of the character and understood the character," says Cannon, who also



had a hand in fashioning the final draft of the screenplay. "I wanted to give Dredd a dimension and wanted to give the story much more meat."

Judge Dredd adheres pretty faithfully to the lore crafted in the comic, aside from adapting it to a much larger canvas and exploring the character's personal life. Lippincott assures us that the fans won't be let down. "We really needed to make him more grounded," says Lippincott. "He was a pretty flat character in the comics, which works in that medium; you can't necessarily do that with a movie. You have to give him some dimension as well as using your secondary characters around him to help give him some depth."

Of course, the die-hard fans expressed some concern with one aspect of the film—the unmasking of Dredd, whose face was never seen in the original comic series, just as his personal life was never a part of the comic's storyline.

"He has the helmet on throughout a large section of the movie before we unmask his character; and we were very specific about when we did that," says Cannon. "If you were *not* going to unmask him, you would have had to have an unknown play the role. But here you have an icon like Stallone,

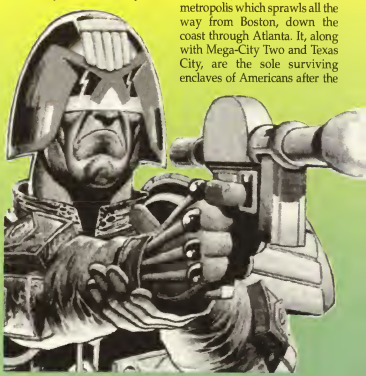
The Roots of Dredd

TWENTY YEARS AGO, COMICS in England were small weekly affairs, featuring the adventures of boys playing soccer far more often than swinging through the streets of an overblown version of New York seeking evil-doers. The United Kingdom's few superheroes and science fiction strips had long since dwindled away by 1977, setting the stage for something dramatically new to occur.

One small publisher, Fleetway, recognizing that it might be time to start competing with American superheroes for the attention and pence of English readers, created a new weekly, *2000 AD*. A "saucy" title, it boasted a variety of new creations, all set on bizarre new worlds or in bleak futuristic times. And with their second issue, there was a glimpse of great things to come as *Judge Dredd* was introduced.

A creation of veteran writer John Wagner and Spanish artist Carlos Ezquerra, Dredd and his fellow Judges hit a nerve with fans. Since that initial story, *Judge Dredd* has not missed a single "prog" of *2000 AD*, now approaching its 950th consecutive week of publication.

Mega-City One, about two hundred years from today (the film is set in a slightly less distant time), is an East Coast metropolis which sprawls all the way from Boston, down the coast through Atlanta. It, along with Mega-City Two and Texas City, are the sole surviving enclaves of Americans after the







LEFT: Filming the action on the elaborate 22nd century city set. ABOVE: Makeup designer Nick Dudman prepares Armand Assante for a scene as the partially formed clone of Rico.

and it works ten times better.

"If you're going to tell the story of a hero, you've got to see him without the mask...this moves Dredd into another level. This guy does have a life, and a past, and we get to find out what that is here."

Audience recognition of the Dredd character will be greater among British fans than here in the States, so Lippincott feels the priority is to make the general moviegoing audience aware that *Judge Dredd* is something they will want to see. Certainly last year's *The Mask* and *Timecop* proved that relatively unknown comic book commodities could be transformed into blockbusters, and Lippincott feels the same could hold true for *Dredd*.

"It's definitely more of a challenge to make audiences aware of it," says Lippincott. "Part of the challenge now is building up an anticipation that audiences will be seeing something on the cutting edge and something that has never been seen before, which is very important to this genre. That is a very fragile area and it's very difficult to do—and if you achieve that, then it's an amazing victory."

Director Cannon agrees and observes that low *Dredd* awareness in the U.S. could actually be for the better. "The awareness is down, but that's to our advantage. After all you're introducing something completely new here."

Certainly some aspects of the revisions made to the *Judge* are an

Continued on page 68

great nuclear conflicts that turned the rest of North America into the "Cursed Earth," with its mutants, monsters, and lawless mayhem. Over time, to control the populace, which had 90 percent unemployment, the Judges took to the streets, empowered to not only uphold the law but administer justice as well. Even for the merest crime, such as jaywalking, a citizen could be sentenced to time in the iso-cubes.

The Judges themselves are held to strict rules and regulations. Training begins at around age five, and only after about fifteen years of work does a cadet get a chance to put on the helmet and eagle representing the law. Should a Judge falter in his or her performance, the Judge is allowed to take "the Long Walk," leaving the safe confines of Mega-City for life in the Cursed Earth.

Judge Dredd has stood head and shoulders above his peers, remaining absolutely incorruptible and the truest keeper of the Law. He has withstood banishment, conspiracies, death threats, death traps and even a protracted case of self-doubt. While the other domed cities around the world have modeled their legal systems after the Judges, all recognize that there remains no better lawman than Judge Dredd.

Dredd was quickly popular; his logo soon shared cover space with *2000 AD* and brought about a renaissance in British comics publishing. The strip and host magazine became a showcase for writers and artists who have since moved on to fame in other venues. The talent list reads like a *Who's Who* of British comics: Alan Grant, Brain Bolland, Mike McMahon, Grant Morrison, Mark Millar, Garth Ennis, Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons, John Ridgway, and Simon Bisley among others. *Dredd*'s popularity led to a newspaper comic strip, started in 1981, and in 1990 it became published under its own monthly title, *Judge Dredd Megazine*.

On this side of the Atlantic, Dredd has had less good fortune until recently. His first American appearance was in a self-titled comic from the short-lived Eagle Comics in 1983, and then in a series of limited duration from Quality Comics. In most cases, the reproduction of the British material did not translate well, owing to the different proportions of American and British comics and also to poor production values.

In 1991, though, Dredd met up with Batman in the first of several appearances, helping to create demand for Mega-City One's greatest champion. With painted art by Simon Bisley, over 300,000 copies were sold worldwide. The second meeting, with art by Cam Kennedy, was released in 1993 and was a set-up for future teamings. The third such collaboration will go on sale this July, with art by Carl Crichlow, and will pit the pair against the Riddler. The fourth team-up will be a two-parter painted by U.K. artist Glenn Fabry and due out in 1996.

Just last year, DC Comics launched two monthly *Dredd* titles: *Judge Dredd* and *Judge Dredd: Legends of the Law*, marking the first time the Judge had all-new stories for American audiences. Written by Andrew Helfer, the first year of the former title provided a detailed backstory to the birth of Mega-City One and Dredd's origins, material only scarcely hinted at in *2000 AD*.

—Robert Greenberger





THE EVOLUTION OF SPECIES

BY ROBERT MARTIN

When Hollywood tackles serious SF, they seek a "serious" filmmaker. The director of* Smash Palace *and* No Way Out *discusses his genre debut.

To the Hollywood mind-set, there is a tiny minority of filmmakers who work in fantastic film genres and yet are considered "serious filmmakers." Of these, Stanley Kubrick is the most prominent, followed by Ridley Scott and John Boorman. And that's about it.

It's a small, charmed circle of men, seldom hampered by the studio tradition of filmmaking by committee, because even their commercial failures become video perennials, while their cult status carries prestige to the studio that bankrolls them.

Roger Donaldson is not among that circle, certainly not yet. But the choice of Donaldson as the director of MGM's *Species*, scheduled to open June 9, instead of any number of directors more experienced in the genre, suggests that MGM is perhaps hoping to bring the touch of a "serious director" to this genre film.

Donaldson's very "serious" credentials were established in the beginning of his career; his 1977 film *Sleeping Dogs* was a low-budget political thriller made in his native New Zealand. It was the first "kiwi" film to be released in the U.S. and introduced to the world a young actor named Sam Neill. Donaldson's second film, 1981's *Smash Palace*, was an early creative peak.

Photos: Warner Bros. Studio



The troubleshooting crew (Forrest Whitaker, Marg Helgenberger, Ben Kingsley, and Alfred Molina) find themselves in more trouble than they can shoot as (opposite) things get well out of hand.

The domestic story of a man whose monomaniacal obsession with cars robs him of the ability to care for people was also written and produced by the young director.

New Zealand, in those days, was spoken of as "an emerging film nation," but its emergence was little more than an illusion created by the desire of Donaldson, and a few others, to make films. According to his account, the most difficult aspect of the New Zealand period was gathering financing in the long years between features. When Hollywood called, Donaldson readily answered, and his first "big" film was the well-received Mel Gibson vehicle, *The Bounty*, in 1984. Ever since, Donaldson's films have had the earmarks of Hollywood, star vehicles with all the polish. But, unlike many Hollywood films, Donaldson's all have at their core a character drama about human weakness, corruption and, occasionally, redemption. That includes *Cadillac Man*, one of the few films in which Robin Williams acts instead of reacts, and *Cocktail*, which surprised a lot of critics who expected a Tom Cruise hunk-a-thon. Recently, during the fad for filming the novels of Jim Thompson (*The Grifters*, *Population 1280*), Donaldson's *The Getaway* was the only film that matched the ruthlessness of Thompson's prose.

So the reasons MGM chose Donaldson to helm *Species* seem pretty clear; the remaining question is, why is Donaldson making a genre film at this stage in his career? "For one thing," he says, "Dennis Feldman [writer-director of *Real Men*—a comedy that includes an alien visitor subplot] had written a very intriguing script. About four years ago, I clipped an article that I'd found rather fascinating about the Search For Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute. S.E.T.I. was involved in an extensive government-funded project—since cut from the budget—to listen to the universe with radio telescopes, scanning all radio frequencies for signs of intelligent life. As part of the S.E.T.I. project, in 1974, Carl Sagan sent a radio message into deep space announcing, more or less, this is Earth, here we are.

"What struck me then, and is also reflected in Dennis Feldman's script, is that it seems an optimistic and perhaps very naive thing to do, to make an effort to gain the attention of whatever it is that might be out there...and it reminds me of what occurred when the first explorers from Europe arrived in already-populated areas of Earth, like Australia, New Zealand and the Americas, and what happened to the people who welcomed these explorers. In such situations, things can change dramatically very quickly, and that is one of the concerns of this movie.

"Another major reason I wanted to do the movie...it seems that digital technology is where the future of entertainment will be. So I was pleased to be able to throw myself into the deep end of that, it's been a great way to learn about that very quickly."

While the film is very much a science fiction thriller, Donaldson





stresses that character drama, rather than effects or SF concepts, will carry the story forward. "The effects are not there to be enjoyed apart from their role in the story. *Jurassic Park*'s selling point, for instance, was not that you were attending that film to be absorbed by the story, so much as to witness things that had never been done in film before. This is intended as a much more plot-driven movie, and more dependent on the human interactions of its characters.

"This is the sort of film that's often done with a B cast. I think the fact that we've gotten a first-rate cast is a tremendous help to it, because of all the little details that can bring a fantastic premise crashing down."

The fantastic premise of *Species* is that the aliens are out there—and first contact has been made. In a message kept secret from all save the few government scientists directly involved, the aliens have sent an immense DNA code sequence, along with instructions to combine it with our own. The result: an invasion of Earth via radio, by an immensely powerful life form.

Ben Kingsley plays Xavier Fitch, the geneticist in charge of the research project that's built the alien. "He plays it very differently from what you might expect of this character," remarks Donaldson. "There's a special relationship between Fitch and the creature, where he thinks of it almost as his own child rather than a research project." Naturally, it's Fitch's desire to salvage something from the project gone wrong.

Press Farley, a hardened mercenary hired to help hunt the alien, is played by Michael Madsen, whose notable work as a murdering maniac in *Reservoir Dogs* was equaled by a similar turn in Donaldson's own *The Getaway*. "I really enjoyed working with Michael," says Donaldson. "He's got a great sense of irony, and he's a great cynic...I find him very entertaining; he's just a great, magnetic 'good-bad guy.' In fact, this is the first time I've worked with the same actor twice."

Alfred Molina, seen as a character actor in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Ladyhawke*, and most recently as "Angel" in *Maverick*, plays "a Harvard intellectual sort, an expert in the interaction of differing cultures; his take on the character is very entertaining."

The cast of characters also includes a "psychic investigator"—a bit of a danger, in that mixing psychic phenomena with science fiction seldom makes a good marriage, as the fantastic compounds the incredible. What may help is that the character of Dan Smithson is played by Forrest Whitaker, an accomplished actor whose solidity plays against the general concept of psychics as high-strung blue-haired ladies.

Donaldson is especially pleased with the contribution of Natasha Henstridge, who plays the human half of the alien, code-named S1L and, therefore, referred to as "Sil." "Natasha is beautiful, twenty years old and, it turns out, a very good actress as well."

Creating the inhuman half of Sil was a collaborative effort between designers, digital effects crew and makeup effects crew, with stellar players in each department.

THE FANTASTIC premise of* Species *is that the aliens are out there—and first contact has been made.

The design was accomplished by H.R. Giger, the fine artist who has enjoyed a mass cult following since his design of the title creature in the original *Alien*. "I was a little nervous," Donaldson admits, "in that I didn't want this to be another version of that alien. But his paintings often include extraordinary female creatures, which made him a perfect choice.

"I visited him in Zurich, at his studio—quite an amazing place. Two little row houses, where he's punched a hole from one into the next one. Walls completely covered with his paintings and drawings, paintings on the ceiling, strange artifacts everywhere, bones and machinery. I remember sitting by a table and thinking, my God, that looks like a shrunken head—and indeed it was, a genuine shrunken head sitting there on the table.

"Giger's efforts on this movie have just been enormous, way above and

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BATMAN REBORN



Photos: Ralph Nelson. © 1995 DC Comics

DUALITY IS VERY MUCH THE THEME OF THIS film," says Tim Burton. "Two-Face, Batman, Dr. Chase Meridian and even Robin are each exploring two sides of their personalities."

That quote, from a Warner Brothers' release, is about all you may expect to hear from executive producer Burton on the subject of *Batman Forever*.

With the third film, the torch passes from Burton to Joel Schumacher, whose own film past traces from *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* through *Flatliners* to last year's *The Client*; even if this film had not undergone the casting upheavals that made tabloid and movie trade headlines last summer, the *Batman* mythos would have undergone a thorough redressing in the hands of Schumacher, a director whose past work is in quite another direction from Burton's; and a director whose own reputation is too large to allow him to blindly execute the designs of another hand.

A new Batman, a new Batmobile, and a whole new look for Gotham City—this is not Tim Burton's **Batman.**

BY BERTHE ROEGGER

Akiva Goldsman, who also worked on Schumacher's *The Client*, and was called upon by the director to bring Lee and Janet Scott Batchler's *Batman Forever* script to final draft, nevertheless assures us that "throughout the picture, we try to stay true to the spirit of *Batman*. We did not want to see anything in the legend of *Batman*

ABOVE: Within the Batcave, the caped crusader stands ready to combat moral depravity wherever it should strike. RIGHT: Dr. Meridian (Nicole Kidman) enjoys an uneventful night out with Bruce Wayne (Kilmer), as evil forces gather. FAR RIGHT: Val Kilmer plays a younger, sexier, and blonder Batman.

changed or perverted."

But the look, he agrees, is decidedly changed. "This new *Batman* has a different breadth, a different light about it. It comes to life, with impressive sets and costumes. In moving from comic book to the screen, one not only wants to reform and revise the characters for the medium, but to change the overall image as well."

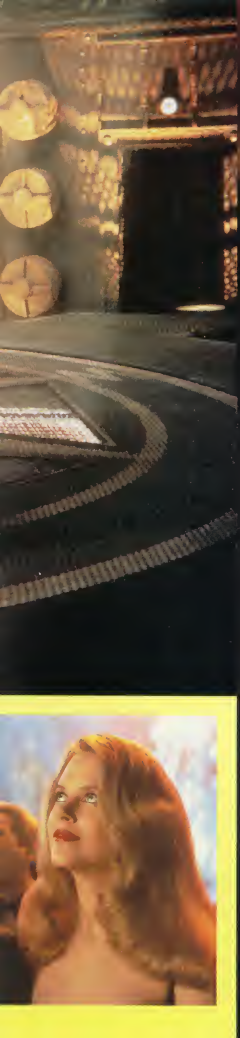
As those who have seen the trailer know, the darkness of Gotham is still present, but that darkness coexists with a brighter, comic-colored world.

"The palette is more varied," Goldsman agrees, though he indicates that the point was to draw inspiration from the comic book, not to be bound by its conventions; "there are things you can do in film you can't do in the comic books—and vice versa."

Production designer Barbara Ling expands on that point. "The idea for this film was to go back to the comics and present an enormous amount of color, washed color and bright images. We wanted to make it look like the entire world just stepped out of the pages of the old comic books and into modern times; I think we did that."

Of course, not only the look, but the lead casting is changed, finalizing the break with the Burton vision of *Batman*. However one feels about the absence of Michael Keaton, there's no disagreeing with Goldsman's comment that "Val Kilmer's Batman, gives







ABOVE: The costume of the Riddler (Jim Carrey) is directly inspired by the comic book character. FAR RIGHT: The familiar red-and-yellow Robin costume has yielded to a more cinema-friendly color scheme.

the character a younger and sexier image."

The younger, sexier, and blonder Bruce Wayne nonetheless has his romantic problems. While poor Bruce feels deep stirrings in his utility belt for the beautiful criminal psychologist Chase Meridian (played by Nicole Kidman of *Dead Calm* and *Malice*), Dr. Meridian is fascinated only by the mysterious figure of the "Dark Knight," Batman. "She has a very refined and dignified side," explains Goldsman, "but there's something about the dark side of life that intrigues and appeals to her as well. That's how she's drawn into Batman's world. He fascinates her."

Also fascinated by the Darkwing Detective is young Dick Grayson, played by Chris O'Donnell, who shot to stardom playing opposite Al Pacino in *Scent of a Woman*. With Robin's first appearance in the film series comes an origin story that will be familiar to regular readers of the comic book as the story of an entirely different character—the second Robin, Jason Todd, a character who was killed off some time ago as the result of a reader's poll, and eventually replaced by the comic book's current Robin, Timothy Drake.

Like Jason Todd, the film's Dick Grayson is the son of circus acrobats, who, like Batman, witnesses the murder of his parents; Grayson's thirst for justice leads him to his position as "junior partner" to Batman in his crime-fighting operation.

On their first case together, the murderer they pursue is none other than former district attorney Harvey Dent, played by Tommy Lee Jones, a veteran actor whose recent character work in *JFK*, *The Fugitive*, and *Natural Born Killers* has placed him on the hot list. Convinced that Batman is responsible for the accident that left one side of his face horribly disfigured, Harvey, or Two-Face as he now prefers to be called, has committed himself to a life of dual extremes—good and evil—as dictated by the flip of a coin.

DESIGN FOR EVIL

Joining him in this campaign of crime are Sugar (Debi Mazur of *LA Law*) and Spice (the inimitable Drew Barrymore), a pair of opposites pro-





viding female companionship for each side of Dent's twisted personality. In fact, everything about Dent is similarly split, posing unique parameters for *Batman Forever*'s production designer, Barbara Ling. "We had to do two sides to everything," she explains; "furnishings all in lovely, pure white and also in narrowing black, dank and evil-looking."

Even Two-Face's weaponry reflects this duality, combining the Depression-era Tommy gun with futuristic high-tech weaponry. Two-Face's ally Edward Nygma, better known as the Riddler (played by Jim Carrey) is armed with a gold cane that converts to a laser weapon.

Evening the odds, Batman will have his own high-tech arsenal as well—to an extent far beyond that of the previous films. "There's a new Batmobile," says Ling, "with a one-of-a-kind, ribbed look, like looking through a skeleton. And there's a Batboat, a Batplane, a three-level Batcave and a mix of old and new Bat-gadgets, everything with a bat look to it, as though Batman designed each piece. There's a Bat-glue gun that shoots purple liquid that solidifies his foes in one place, and a car-mounted grappling hook that shoots up and attaches to a building so the car can drive straight up the building.

"The high-tech batsuits shoot a series of batarangs in rapid machine-gun manner, and another, high-tech batarang that's computer-aided; it zips around and comes back with information on a read-out screen. We've also got batcuffs—they're ejected and they fly through the air to cuff the bad guys."

Ling, who started in production design with the off-beat films of David Byrne (*True Stories*) and Susan Seidelman (*Making Mr. Right*) took her place among the heavyweights in the film business with her more recent credits, including *Fried Green Tomatoes* and Schumacher's own *Falling Down*. But this is her first film of such immense scope.

"It was very exciting, working in this large a scale," she says. "It's a dream to do something of this proportion. The sets took a year to put together; usually a film takes six to eight months. Altogether, it's been a year-and-a-half of long days, sometimes working six or seven days a week."

Two of those seven-day weeks were spent in New York City, where colorful billboards and garish neon were used, along with several examples of statuary, all of them over thirty feet tall, to transform a section of the financial district into the comic book town of Gotham City. "Many of the street

"WE DID not want to see anything in the legend of Batman *changed or perverted."*





ABOVE: Sugar (Debi Mazur) and Spice (Drew Barrymore) exist to double the pleasure of the twisted Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones). FAR RIGHT: One goal of the filmmakers is to portray the city of Gotham in more extensive detail than has ever been seen before.

scenes were shot there, when we needed the cavernous look of narrow streets surrounded by fifty-story buildings—that couldn't be built on a soundstage."

In addition to location filming in New York, and more in L.A., the filming "took up eight soundstages," says Ling. "The hangar that stored Howard Hughes' the *Spruce Goose* was also used—it's about the size of ten soundstages, so it allowed them to build at an immense scale, while another, miniature version of Gotham was built for the special effects unit."

STREETS OF GOTHAM

The visual effects of *Batman Forever* were in the capable hands of John Dykstra, who rose to effects stardom with his Oscar-winning work on the original *Star Wars*. "We're going to see a lot of Gotham," he promises. "We've made up a pretty substantial version of Gotham, that will be significantly different than any that you've ever seen before. We're not limited to a few specific locations; we get out there and take a look at what the streets of Gotham are all about."

In addition to miniature work, the effects pioneer has gone to great lengths to use computer graphics imaging in subtle ways that will not be recognized as such in the finished film. "The computer-generated stuff allows a lot of flexibility," he says, "and a lot of opportunities, but it tends to be an embarrassment of riches, because basically you can do almost anything. You have to be careful that you don't find yourself doing things just for the sake of doing them. We want to create a certain look, and not overdo the CGI, and we're doing a lot of miniature work in combination





with that." He is especially proud of his 'CGI Batman,' called upon to perform feats that would have been too unsafe for a flesh-and-blood stuntman. "That worked out very well; so much so that I think scenes were added to the script that the producers now felt we could do because the CGI character looked so good. And there's also a fun scene where Robin takes the Batmobile out for a spin, that's a mixture of miniatures and CGI."

Since the effects unit was in charge of shooting "mini-Gotham," Dykstra was also very much involved in executing the new look of *Batman*.

"This project has afforded us the opportunity to work in a very collaborative way—with the director, writer, set designer, production designer, and the director of photography—we offered capabilities, and they were incorporated into the story. In some cases, we had to come up with ways to create concepts that were written into the story that had no fixed solution. That's always a challenging part of this job; the whole crew worked very well together to make things happen and to get the right look."

A look, says Dykstra, that makes this "a departure from the norm of effects films; there are more contrasts, more extremes.... It's more of a graphic novel. We're taking a very vivid and surrealist approach to the FX, both in terms of basic premise, plus in the way we're using more color and contrast. I think you'll notice there's movement in the film that comes across very differently from what you've seen before."

Having spoken with these three people, all with amply demonstrated talent, and all of whom have given themselves for a year and more to the latest incarnation of *Batman*, one can't help but wonder at the marvels of the movie business. There's no question that the re-thinking of *Batman*, after two successful films, is an enormous risk; and all of it—the millions of dollars invested, the talent, the long hours, perhaps even a few careers—rest, like Harvey Dent's mood swings, on a flip of a coin—Will it be bright shiny heads? Regardless, the daring of the venture deserves its credit.

The coin is in the air; it lands on June 16th. Call it. □

The Cosmic Slide

In Fox Television's* Sliders, *history is written in disappearing ink.

BY SIMON BACALL



ABOVE: Typical teen antigravity researcher Quinn Mallory (Jerry O'Connell) and his rock star buddy Rembrandt (Cleavont Derricks). OPPOSITE: Mallory and Professor Maximillian Arturo (John Rhys-Davies) challenge the unknown, clicking their remote to "slide" from world to world.

BRITAIN SQUASHED THE AMERICAN REVOLT. SHE THEN renamed her territories the British States of America and retained her grip through the centuries. Today, the country's citizens read the newspaper *BSA Today* over afternoon tea, keeping track of the doings of Parliament and the affairs of the ruling family, content in their role as part of the greatest empire the world has known.

This universe is one of many alternate worlds to be visited in *Sliders*. Drawing on the Irwin Allen tradition of following travelers on a sojourn through a strange and threatening world (i.e., *Valley of the Giants, Land of the Lost*, ad infinitum), and borrowing *Quantum Leap*'s device of skewing our perspective on the world we inhabit, the program's bid for success seems based on a cagey mix of the familiar and the fresh.

Heading development and production are executive producers and co-creators Tracey Tormé and Robert Weiss. Tormé is known to fans as a former story editor and consultant on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; Robert Weiss is a veteran producer of such films as *The Blues Brothers, Kentucky Fried Movie* and *The Naked Gun*.

"Parallel universes are not a wild theory, they're now accepted as fact," says Weiss. "Scientists can't explain quantum physics unless they assume that multiple worlds really exist."

"If alternate worlds do exist, someone will discover them by accident, a scenario which we mirror in our show," adds Tormé. "In *Sliders*, our lead character is not looking for parallel universes, but it happens when he's working on something else."

The two-hour pilot, which aired March 22, introduced Quinn Mallory, (Jerry O' Connell of *Stand By Me*), a college student whose work on an antigravity device inadvertently opens a "wormhole" that tunnels to a nexus joining an infinite number of parallel universes.

"During the early stages we described the project as a sideways version of *Time Tunnel*, but instead of focusing on time travel, *Sliders* is always set on present-day Earth, which distinguishes it from most other sci-fi shows," says

Weiss. "In some cases, the worlds are completely unlike our Earth, but in those instances where everything appears the same, the changes are very subtle. When Quinn first discovers the wormhole, he steps through it, still finds himself in the basement, and figures that the whole thing is a bust, but when he drives to the university, he stops at a red light, and people start honking and shouting all kinds of insults. Then, when he goes at a green light, he narrowly misses being hit by traffic—he finally realizes that the experiment has worked, because he's in a place where green means stop and red means go."

In the pilot, Quinn and his friends became stranded thanks to a short circuit in the remote control mechanism. The show's title refers to the dimensional travelers' ability to slide from one parallel world to another in their attempts to return home.

"Quinn is certainly a young genius, but you wouldn't necessarily know it, because he looks like an average fun-loving, likeable college kid," says Tormé. "Wade (Sabrina Lloyd), who works with Quinn in a computer store, is this adventurous 1960s-type gal. Meanwhile, Arturo (John Rhys-Davies), feels very under-appreciated—he has this really interesting mix of security and ego. In an alternate world, the parallel Arturo is much more likely to be evil than the other characters. Finally, Rembrandt (Cleavont Derricks) used to be with a rock group, but his career has gone downhill since he walked out on them in a highly publicized dispute. When we meet Rembrandt, he's trying to make a comeback, but en route to the comeback, he's accidentally swept into the wormhole, so he certainly is an unlucky part of their experiment."

Tormé's script for the pilot is a cold warrior's worst paranoid fantasy, with America living under the iron fist of Soviet rule, inspired by Jack Webb's 1956 television film *Red Nightmare* (released on video as *The Communists Are Coming!*). Especially befitting the show's San Francisco setting is another Tormé-scripted episode, "The Summer of Love," with the 1990s reshaped to resemble the 1960s and Australia recast as Vietnam; Tormé cites this episode as an example of how the series creates a subtle shift in the perception of real-world events.

Also on the way are episodes depicting the legacy of a Nazi victory in World War II; a world under attack from a virulent, unkillable virus; and, in a lighter vein, "The King Is Back," an episode where Rembrandt is a rock star who is bigger than Elvis—and, until the sliders arrive, just as dead.

Eight episodes—each sojourning to a different "what-if" world—are on order for the series; cast and crew are sincerely hoping that they *don't* "slide home" too soon. □



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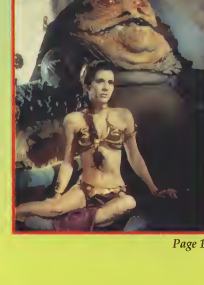
British television has produced some frequently overlooked sci-fi gems.

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Once there was a time, not so very long ago, before the stars had names…



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Test your knowledge of the comic book personae who have moved from panel to screen.

The Cover: *The caped crusader in* Batman Forever.

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CASPER HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE!



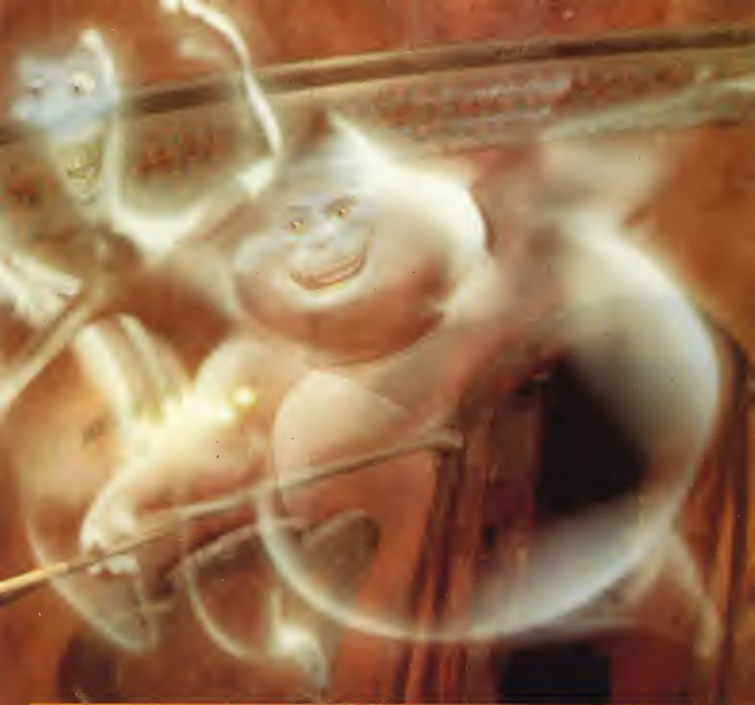
The Ghostly Trio gives some shock therapy to Dr. James Harvey (played by Bill Pullman), an afterlife therapist tasked with coaxing the ghosts into leaving this world.

On the way to the '90s, says director Brad Silberling, the friendly ghost acquired an edge.

BY CURT WELLS

WHEN PARANORMAL activity gets out of hand, there are ghostbusters just a phone call away. But when you're dealing with a friendly, sugar-coated ghost like Casper—*who* are you going to call?

That was the dilemma facing Steven Spielberg last year when he was searching for the right director to bring the comic book *Casper* to the live-action big screen.



Alex Proyas, director of *The Crow,* was signed to breathe life into the lonely little apparition, but undisclosed "creative differences" arose, and Proyas left the production. With shooting rapidly approaching, Spielberg had to find someone *fast.*

Enter Brad Silberling, a rising TV talent, and one of the guiding forces behind *Brooklyn Bridge*, who cut his teeth directing Steven Bochco dramas *NYPD Blue* and *L.A. Law.*

"I had no background in special effects and no background in character animation, so when Steven called about the movie, I laughed and told him that he must have called the wrong person," says the modest Silberling.

After all, prime time drama and effects-driven spectacle are two very different animals. But Spielberg explained to Silberling that he had faith that the young director would rise to the challenge, saying that what the movie needed was a sense of humor and a tremendous sense of heart and that he would be able to learn the other stuff, recalls Silberling.

Of course Silberling didn't realize the scope of *Casper;* this was not designed to be a quick kiddie cartoon knock-off that would be in and out of mall multiplexes after two or three bountiful box office weekends. On the contrary, the script by *Animaniacs* writers Sherri Stoner and Deanna Oliver is a goofy mixture of family entertainment and the type of deadpan dark comedy that has fueled the huge success of graveyard comedies from *Beetlejuice* to *The Addams Family.*

"This is definitely not a film geared specifically toward eight-year-olds," says Silberling. "If you look at the themes of *Beetlejuice* or *Ghostbusters*, they're not soft family films either. What's nice though,



ABOVE: Casper finds a soul mate in Dr. Harvey's daughter, Kat (played by Christina Ricci). RIGHT: Kat's dad finds levity in her request for a Halloween party.

is that you *can* bring your younger kids in there and they're not going to be panicked. I think they were hoping the film would have a fairly broad appeal, but we didn't realize until we got in there how broad its appeal would be. All of a sudden, the film is starting to feel like those old Warner Brothers cartoons where adults can catch all the references and anecdotes, which makes it a much edgier movie—but kids will enjoy it as well."

The premise, with many essentials adapted directly from Casper's life in the pages of Harvey Comics, finds our dead hero haunting the abandoned Whipstaff Manor. Trapped there with his three mischievous uncles the Ghostly Trio—Stretch, Fatso, and Stinkie—the friendly ghost finds it impossible to have an afterlife of his own. Every time he comes close to making a friend, his uncles scare them away.

Enter Carrigan Crittenden (Cathy Moriarty), the new owner, who hopes to find the legendary treasure said to be stashed somewhere in the mansion, who soon encounters the playful torment of the Ghostly Trio.

Trying everything from exorcism to demolishing portions of the house, Carrigan almost gives up until she decides to hire Dr. James Harvey (Bill Pullman), a pop psychologist catering to unwanted apparitions. He arrives at Whipstaff Manor with plans to therapeutically coax the ghosts into a final departure for the other side—which, naturally, is the last thing they want to do.

Complications ensue when Dr. Harvey's beautiful young daughter, Kat (Christina Ricci), befriends Casper, which ultimately leads to the most complicated problem of all—Casper falls in love with her.

"I call Casper a contemporary latchkey kid," says Silberling. "Even though he's dead, he's still stuck at home. He can't go out because he scares the shit out of everybody. I think what we've done is taken the heart of the original premise and just run with it. We have all these interesting emotional sides that were never really there originally. So it's a lot of fun tipping our hats at everybody's memories of what Casper was and then going beyond it."

The filmmakers also realized that Casper's origins needed to be dealt with—an issue too somber for the Harvey Comics line. Silberling promises that for the first time ever, it will be revealed how Casper became his translucent self.

THE PRINCIPAL SHOOT PROVED TO BE a breeze for Silberling; the post-production effects work provided the project's challenge. Casper was designed from the start to be the next step in the progress of computer-generated imaging (CGI). If *Jurassic Park* could create dinosaurs from scratch, why not actual ghostly actors?

"This is the first time you'll see what amounts to a character created in computer-generated animation," the director says. "*Jurassic Park* was photo realism. That was a spectacle, but what you're dealing with here is creating actors that have expression and dialogue, and the technological advances have brought us an even greater subtlety. The acting in the movie had to be more subtle because you're dealing with real characters."

This virtual leap in the CGI field was spearheaded by the *Jurassic Park* team of Industrial Light and Magic (ILM), under the supervision of seven-time Academy Award





winner Dennis Muren. Casper and his pals have been brewing in this wizard's workshop for the better part of two years.

"*Jurassic Park* had fifty-six shots, which was about seven minutes of CGI work," says Silberling. "In *Casper*, we now have close to 400 shots and we have over forty minutes. So close to half the movie is loaded with this stuff."

With an estimated 40 to 50 million dollar budget, Casper began principal photography last January and wrapped in early June. The reason for the extensive shooting schedule was the enormity of staging each individual shot that would later be handled by the CGI animators. Much like *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, cameras and actors were subject to extremely precise blocking of movement, needed to give the impression that absent ghosts were actually in the room interacting with the living cast members.

"It's like doing a huge effects film in production and then going back and doing it all over again in post," says Silberling. "This is the next generation of *Roger Rabbit*, because you're dealing with interactivity and a human cast. This is a live-action movie, but because we'll have ghosts in the scenes with the actors, there are cables being pulled, curtains being blown and actors being yanked around—and all of those effects have to happen live so it looks interactive later on when you place the composites of the ghosts on film."

Silberling insisted that the vocal performers behind the ghosts be present to act their vocal roles on set, instead of relying on the usual prerecorded tracks. Silberling observes that this helped give a much more spontaneous feeling. He hired stand-up comedians Joe Nipote, Brad Garrett and Joe Alaskey to provide the voices, respectively, of Stretch, Fatso and Stinkie.

"We had our actors on set so they could interact live with the cast in front of the cameras," says Silberling. "That allowed for some real performing in terms of overlaps, and they could bounce ideas off each other.

"It's like learning another language," he says. "When you go to a foreign country, you have to learn it quickly, and that's kind of what happened. I think I've learned a tremendous amount as a director about certain sorts of acting moments, because what you find working with animators is that you have to constantly remind them about the moment in a scene. Again, it's about subtlety in acting. Their first instincts are to go for the big clichéd pose, because it symbolizes something very easily.

"Literally all the performances you'll see on screen will be generated from nowhere. We simply had the vocal tracks that were captured on set, and I sat with the animators in Los Angeles to basically do pencil sketches of what I was acting out. Animators at ILM would then use those pencil sketches as a blueprint; I would spend two days a week in Northern California with them. So it's actually been a wonderful exercise for me as a director, and I think we've pulled it off.

"My memory of Casper was of this little glow ball who was a bit too sweet; he felt like a seven-year-old floating around, and that wasn't of remarkable interest to me," he explains. "I wanted to make him more of an adolescent. Christina Ricci in our movie is a thirteen-year-old, and to me it made more sense to have a pairing of minds and attitudes. And the great thing with Casper was to take a character nobody expects anything from and really create someone with a sense of humor and attitude. The one core idea that still exists is that he is genuinely glum in the beginning because he can't make friends. We find out it's not because he himself scares everybody, but because he's stuck at home with obnoxious relatives, and his uncles scare off everybody before he ever gets a crack at striking up a friendship."

FOR A FIRST-TIME FEATURE DIRECTOR, the circus atmosphere of a movie as complex as Casper might have been a little overwhelming, but Silberling observes that his journey in bringing Casper to the screen has been worth it the entire way.

"Sid Sheinberg, the CEO of Universal, came by the set one day with Steven, and Steven asked me what I was doing that day," recalls Silberling. "This was like day sixty-five out of ninety-two days, and when I started to describe what we were doing, I was still very excited. Sid then looked at me in a very dry manner and said, 'You look like you're having fun—I didn't know that was in our directors' contracts.' And I said, 'I know, I'm sorry, I'll stop right now.' So working on this has been fantastic. We're really taking things to the next level, and that's the great part. We have a movie here where everyone's expectations are at zero, and I think we've come up with original situations and ideas that were never thought of in the original cartoon."

So, to sum up: *Casper* will have the graveyard humor of *Beetlejuice;* computer graphics beyond *Jurassic Park;* and the live-action animation interactivity of a *Roger Rabbit*.

Sounds so crazy, it just might work. □

Actor Bronson Pinchot and producer Richard Rubinstein take us behind the scenes of a "television event."

STEPHEN KING'S The Langoliers

BY BERTHE ROEGGER

EARLIER THIS YEAR, NBC television shocked their industry, announcing a mammoth $50-million deal for rights to Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*. There were numerous reasons for NBC to make the record-breaking deal, including a desire to solidify relations with the creative team behind their hit series *ER*. But many analysts said that the overriding factor in the deal was a ratings threat posed by rival ABC's special relationship with Laurel Entertainment and Stephen King.



Baxter Harris (Bronson Pinchot) confronts the nightmare of a lifetime on the tarmac of a Maine Airport.

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According to these analysts, the rights were purchased specifically to counter-program opposite ABC's third annual miniseries from Laurel Entertainment, *Stephen King's The Langoliers*. And that, no doubt, is the reason that ABC, at our press-time, has yet to name specific air dates for the two-part show, saying only that it will air sometime this May—thus leaving NBC to wonder exactly where to play their very expensive trump.

To an extent, NBC is reacting more to last year's King "event," *The Stand* miniseries, which reached over 70 million viewers, than to *The Langoliers* itself. Drawn from a relatively minor work, a novella from King's 1990 volume *Four Past Midnight*, its scope is far narrower; where *The Stand* was a continent-spanning epic and a fantastical chapter in human history, *The Langoliers* is a *Twilight Zone*-ish concept overlaid with King's weird skew that unfolds in a close approximation of real time. Its crew of sharply drawn characters, more than its storyline, is likely to sustain viewer interest.

The story concerns ten people on a routine commercial air flight who pass



through a temporal-spatial rift, emerging to find that everyone else on the plane has vanished. Luckily, one of the ten, played by David Morse (best known for his role as a doctor on TV's *St. Elsewhere*), is an off-duty airline pilot. Also along for the ride are Dean Stockwell (of *Quantum Leap*), as a mystery novelist who applies his writer's imagination to the party's strange situation, and newcomer Kate Maberly as a young blind girl whose intuition offers warning of a sinister force that may bring doom to the travelers.

The above-named actors give superior performances in *The Langoliers*, but the standout is Bronson Pinchot, the comedic actor best known as "Sergei" in *Beverly Hills Cop*, who expands his range considerably as Baxter Harris, a Wall Street shark and psychopathic loon. It's an emotionally demanding role, requiring Pinchot to act, in turns, as a childish self-centered yuppie, a repentant wayward son, and a tormented, inverted weirdo subject to fits of erotic delirium, obsessive-compulsive behavior, and murderous rage. In virtually every scene, he is at an emotional edge.

At a meet-and-greet press affair held by ABC at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Pasadena, Pinchot kept things lively with wisecracks and one-liners but left no room for doubt of his serious commitment as an actor.

Pinchot was pleased to take the role, he says, because "it was just a major change. And it *was* tough." The actor sees a common thread in villainy and comedy: "For me, where they touch is that I develop my sense of humor from pain that I suffered as a young person. All I have to do to get to angry stuff, or painful stuff, is just go that much fur-



Guy D'Alema / © 1995 Capital Cities/ABC, Inc.

Ten people on a commercial air flight pass through a temporal-spatial rift and emerge to find that everyone else on the plane has vanished.

ther than where the comedy is, and it's there. It's the same source, just a little bit deeper.

"I had always found that, in doing light comedy, I was pretty much a stressed-out individual when I went home; being light and buoyant and joyful for seven years and not being able to really have any angst made me kind of stressed out.

"I'm doing this, and there's lots of violence in it. I stab several people and terrorize several more—and I was really in a rather jolly mood...I mean, except when I had really tough things to do. But doing serious work lightens you, and doing light work can make you a little snappy, I think."

Pinchot also tackled several physically demanding scenes, as when he freaks out while hogtied on the floor of an airport terminal building. But Pinchot's final scene, in which he comes face to face with the nightmares of his abused childhood on an airfield's tarmac, was off the scale both emotionally and physically.

"Luckily, all those tough scenes were in the first four weeks," he says. "And I would just show up with my headphones and just do a lot of, like—'don't *talk* to me—I've got to be *scary*.'"

Pinchot was involved in such internal acting work on one memorable morning. "I had a scene where I've been bludgeoned almost to death. And then this little psychic girl sends me a vision and I'm crawling toward it, but I'm almost dead. I'm bleeding and crying, and everything.

"I was sitting in the makeup chair, preparing for that. And they had a few extras around that were chit-chatting. And I said, 'Get those people *out* of here. I just can't believe what I've got to do!' And then they got rid of them, but there was *still* somebody jabbering away in the hall.

"And I said, 'Who's *that*? Get—' And there was like a hideous silence. And I said, 'Whoever is talking in that hall has *got* to understand that I'm playing a killer—and I'm going to *kill that person!* Shut them *up!*' And the person kept talking and I didn't know why nobody ever told them to shut up.

"Then I got in the elevator, getting ready to do the scene. And the loud, tall person that had been talking was in the elevator with me—and it was Stephen King. And he was just enjoying the moment, because I'd sent eighteen messages to tell him to shut up.

"So he was on the set that day with his big Cheshire Cat grin. But he was immediately supportive, so that it wasn't scary to have him there. Even though I'd already told him that he had to be really quiet or I'd kill him."

King himself makes an appearance in the scene Pinchot described. "When I'm stumbling around bleeding onto the tarmac and the little girl sends me the vision, Steve is the centerpiece of that mirage."

Pinchot expresses particular pleasure in his conviction that no one who enjoyed King's original story should



be disappointed. Pinchot did, however, point out the omission of a certain amount of "backstory" on the lives of the characters that had been reduced by writer-director Tom Holland (of *Child's Play* fame) into a few lines of dialogue.

Producer Richard Rubinstein, who entered television with the classic series *Tales from the Darkside* and whose association with King dates back to 1982's *Creepshow*, agrees. "You know, adaptations aren't measured literally; you're dealing in a different medium. But I know Steve's reaction was that, from a creative standpoint, this was really faithful to his book. It's a very close adaptation. There's a lot of Steve's dialogue that went straight into the script.

"I think we've all gone to a movie and said, 'Oh, gee, I miss that scene [from the book].' It actually wound up where there's not a whole lot of new stuff added, and most of the story that Steve wrote is in the screenplay. But I don't think that that's what makes a successful adaptation—it's really finding a way to maintain the flavor.

"Miniseries are rhythmically very much like a book, with chapters, so adapting for miniseries purposes is rhythmically pretty close to book rhythms. I know that Steve enjoys the form and has come to really like working and seeing his work adapted that way, because you don't have to stretch and you don't have to cram. And, you know, for a filmmaker to get an opportunity to make what is slightly north of a three-hour movie, if you take out the commercial time, is a wonderful opportunity to tell longer stories. Because if you make a movie for the theater, there's that two-hour limit."

Of the story's cast of characters, only one was lost in the adaptation, a fellow who sleeps throughout the entire adventure. "We combined that character with another character," Rubinstein says, "so that aspect of, say, being asleep is still there, but not across the whole story. But everybody else that you meet in the book, you'll meet on the screen."

And you will also meet the titular 'langoliers.' According to Rubinstein, "everybody knows the langoliers in one form or another. You know, when you're younger and your parents want to instill a certain discipline into you, they tell you that if you don't behave a certain way, the bogeyman is going to get you. Well, this is Steve's word for a certain kind of horror, a thing that 'goes bump in the night.'"

The toothy, hyperactive critters were realized by a New York visual effects firm called The Image Works, that also made a more subtle contribution by producing several shots of the airliner in flight—sequences that few viewers are likely to identify as computer-generated—and the climactic scenes when the time-rift appears on screen.

Rubinstein says King—who has expressed his dissatisfaction with the creature effects in the *Tommyknockers* mini—has approved Image Works' realization of the digital critters.

King's creative involvement in *The Langoliers* was pretty low-key, says Rubinstein. "Over the fifteen years that he and I have worked as a team, we've evolved a sort of rhythm; Steve checks in at certain points. He read the first draft script, he read the second draft script. He watched the dailies for the first ten days. He had a couple of selective comments that he and Tom Holland talked about. But he respects the level of professionalism of the people that were involved. He wanted everyone to know that he was there, backing them, but he wasn't there to make the movie. It was slightly different from *The Stand*, where that was an adaptation he'd written, and in which he had a larger acting role. So he was involved at the right points in time, without making everyone feel that he was breathing down their necks."

Last summer's live-action filming of the show was complicated by the choice of location—in the middle of a fully operational airport in Bangor, Maine, where much of the story's action is set; an L-1011 fuselage, carved into ten sections that were hinged together to allow access for crew and equipment, served as the primary on-location set.

"Usually producers stay as far away from airports as they can," Rubinstein chuckles. "The Bangor Airport in summer, because of its proximity to Bar Harbor, is a very busy airport.

"And it wasn't just the planes, it was all the people moving through the airport—at some point, somebody goes for their luggage who doesn't care about our film. They want to get their luggage and go."

Despite the hardship, Rubinstein felt he made the right choice, "because

Continued on page 65

OPPOSITE: The principal cast of The Langoliers *venture out to meet an empty world. BELOW: The Chairman of the Board, author Stephen King.*



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Renaissance Man

An Afternoon With Stan Winston



By Lisa Maccarillo

In the dark heart of the Congo sits an abandoned city full of diamonds. No European has ever been known to venture into it and survive. An expedition from a computer corporation is sent into the African jungle to find the lost city of Zinj, but a video of their last satellite communication reveals a ruined camp, a massacred party. A single figure passes on the screen…a dark face, an out-of-focus hand, and then the camera is smashed, the picture cut off. Whatever it is, it's not human.

"They are called the Grays, and they are a combination of gorilla, chimpanzee, possibly even a little of the nastiest ape alive, which is man," says legendary character designer Stan Winston, who, along with his team of artists, sculptors and technicians, has created a new species of gorilla for the upcoming motion picture *Congo*, based on the best-selling novel by Michael Crichton.

Anomalies in the animal kingdom, the Grays, as initially imagined by novelist-screenwriter Michael Crichton, were engineered as a species constantly at war. Having outlived the civilization that created them, they wait in the dark jungle, poised to attack anyone who would steal their city's precious lode.

"A Gray gorilla is about the size of a regular gorilla but is definitely not a gorilla," says Winston, whose concept of the Grays closely mirrors Crichton's, but with a few tweaks here and there. "Real gorillas are, in fact, some of the most docile characters going. They're very family-oriented and non-aggressive. On the other hand, chimpanzees are extremely aggressive, extremely nasty and very warring. The Grays are a new species, a mutation. These are warriors. These are aggressive killing machines."



FX wizard Stan Winston, along with director Frank Marshall, and producer Kathy Kennedy show off some of the "Grays" from Congo.

Photo: Merrick Morton

A small model of a Gray Gorilla is poised on the long conference table at which we sit in the "gallery room" of Stan Winston Studio, its fierce eyes glaring out at the much larger, full-scale creations that line the walls. "This is a Gray," Winston says, turning the pale gray figure around on its stand. The model is approximately two feet tall and sculpted with painstaking detail. Like its spiritual ancestor, King Kong, the Gray's face is strikingly human, with hauntingly expressive eyes. "They have the structure, the power and the size of a gorilla; they have the aggressive quality of a chimpanzee, and they have just the downright nasty meanness of man."

The adventure in *Congo* begins when two individuals, played by newcomers Laura Linney and Dylan Walsh, penetrate the Congo to both investigate the massacre of the previous expedition and find the diamonds. Their only ally in the jungle is an eight-year-old adolescent mountain gorilla named Amy. "Amy, I must say, is one of my favorite characters because there is so much heart and soul that goes along with who she is," Winston says. "Amy can make you love her. The Grays are the icing of this movie. They're the thing we are waiting to see, the thing we don't want to see. The Grays can kill you. I would say that Amy is the heart of the movie and the Grays are the edge."

With Amy, Winston's challenge was to create a character that could perform throughout the entire film, communicating with her human companions through sign language. An enormous amount of preparation and coordination went into designing both the Grays and Amy and then having them go out and act alongside flesh and blood actors. "We have birthed a female adolescent mountain gorilla with which we took *some* artistic license," Winston says. "Amy had six months of rehearsal to learn her part. All the Grays rehearsed for about four to six months. To create these characters in the real world and make you believe that they are in fact real animals and yet can do things beyond what even a real gorilla

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Photo: Merrick Morton

In this scene from Congo *(above) the expedition reaches its goal, an ancient temple within the forbidden city. Winston has had his hands on several blockbuster films. Seen here (far right), one of the 'raptors built by Winston and crew for* Jurassic Park.

can do is extremely strenuous."

Visiting Winston's Van Nuys-based compound is like stepping into another dimension. A model of the Mother Alien from the 1986 feature, *Aliens*, guards the door. The offices are decorated with images from the Renaissance period, only done in high contrast black and white. While I wait, I'm treated to a grand tour of the facilities by Tara Crocitto, Winston's head of development. Beginning with the main building, then expanding to engulf two additional hangar-sized buildings, the studio has at once the nuts and bolts feel of an auto assembly plant, the look and smell of an art studio, and the slick design of a production company.

Situated just beyond the offices, the gallery room has the disorienting feel of a dream. It's a testament to Winston's incredible achievement in the field of special makeup and creature effects, what he calls "character design." A four-time Academy Award winner, Winston has created some of the most memorable characters in cinema history. The figures in this room act as a visual timeline of his groundbreaking career. A crumbling life-size Lestat stands alongside re-creations of the classic Universal horror legends: the Mummy, Dracula, the Frankenstein Monster. The Predator exchanges glances with a ragged, lifelike model of Schwarzenegger's T-1000. There is a fierce, towering Pumpkinhead, a soulful-eyed Edward Scissorhands, and a portly model of Danny DeVito as the Penguin. A 'raptor's crafty eyes follow you around the room.

His studio was responsible for 65 percent of the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park*, the blockbuster event film which many moviegoers described as the closest anyone in the twentieth century would ever get to seeing real dinosaurs. His studio provided life-size articulated versions of a twenty foot *Tyrannosaurus rex*, a six foot-tall *Velociraptor*, the long-necked *Brachiosaurus*, a sick *Triceratops*, a *Gallimimus*, the spitting *Diplodocus*, and a baby 'raptor hatchling. "I see the movie and I go, wow, how'd we do that?" Winston says. "And then I have to put myself out of it and go, I didn't do that. I was part of it, but all these brilliant people that I'm surrounded by did it. There's not a character in here that we're looking at, not a character in any of these movies, that I created alone. They were written. There was the director's vision. There was the artistic involvement of tons of artists' drawings and sculptures—sometimes drawings and sculptures of mine, but always with input from all of these creative, artistic people around. Basically, I'm lucky to be the common denominator. Every one of these characters is collaborative."

Winston's interest in creature creation grew out of his early love for fantasy films. "My favorite films involve strange characters, sometimes scary, sometimes not scary, fun characters, fantasy characters," he says, a mischievous smile transforming his handsome face into that of a kid. "*King Kong* was one of my favorite movies. I loved *The Wizard of Oz* and all the original classic horror movies. I loved actors playing parts, Spencer Tracy's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Charles Laughton as the Hunchback of Notre Dame. I also loved magic. I loved tricking people, when everyone says, 'How did you do that?' I was an amateur magician. I played with string puppets, hand puppets. I look back now and go, OK, there was the thing I enjoyed: creating characters and creatures.

So, what I do now is create characters for film, whether they are actors playing roles or characters that are totally created in the imagination, like King Kong, the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park*, like the Gray gorillas, and then bring them to life and fool you. You want to know how I did that? Dinosaurs aren't alive! Amy couldn't be real. How do you do that? Well, it's the character and the puppetry, but it's also the magic. It's all those things I was interested in as a kid."

Even as a child in the movie theater, Winston showed the perfectionism that's become his trademark. "I used to love to go to see the monster movies and the horror movies," he says. "I couldn't wait to see the monster. And most of the time I was disappointed. Even if it was a movie I liked, that aspect of it wasn't quite as good as I'd wished it could have been. So, I always had this imagination that made it better, and that's what I've tried to do."

AFTER GRADUATING WITH A DEGREE in drama and fine arts from the University of Virginia, Winston completed six thousand hours in theatrical makeup apprenticeship at the Walt Disney Studio, where he studied with makeup veteran Bob Schiffer. "Usually, we're most well-known for the characters that have been created here that scare you," Winston says. "But much of my background and a lot of my interest is Disney, so for me, creating characters does not necessarily mean only monsters. I think we need to put some out there that are lovable and something you want to dream about and not have nightmares about. Amy's one of those great characters that I think kids of all ages will have nice dreams about."

Prior to his work on *Congo*, Winston designed a gang of mutant kangaroos, called Rippers, for Rachel Talalay's *Tank Girl*, a project which on the surface wouldn't appear to have the budget for Winston's company. "We create characters for films," he says. "The budget is irrelevant. If the characters are interesting and something we want to be involved with, then you work within the parameters that you have to work within—as long as you can do a good job and bring something wonderful to the characters. That's not to say that I wouldn't love lots of time and money to do every job, because time and money equates to attention to detail, but it doesn't limit you from doing anything really wonderful. We did *Tank Girl* because I read the script and loved it. The Rippers seemed like fun, wonderful characters that originated as comic book characters, and we thought it would be an interesting and fun job for us. We did it because we wanted to do it, because it would be artistically creative, and all the guys at the studio were anxious to jump into it."

Headed by art department coordinators John Rosengrant and Shane Mahan, and mechanical department coordinator Richard



Landon, Winston's crack team of artists, sculptors and technicians have remained loyal while dozens of effects companies sprout up around them. He describes them as "seventy of the finest artists and technicians in the world working under one roof" and has compared their work to that of Michelangelo, who went to great lengths to capture lifelike physical perfection in his works of art.

"If you're about magic and you're about creating characters, you can't eliminate any tool that helps you do that," he says. "Although I've been a fan of stop-motion animation for years, I also didn't want you to feel that there was any technique to the characters that I wanted to bring to the screen and to the audience. In the first *Terminator* film, the Terminator was so real to me and so visceral, and there were a couple of stop-motion animation shots that, although they were cool, bothered me because it obviously wasn't real. Obviously it was animation. So, I've always sort of steered away from animation. Now, with the breakthroughs that Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) made for *Jurassic Park*, suddenly animation wasn't animation anymore. Suddenly we were looking at characters that did not feel animated and were. We were looking at robots and animatronics that did not look like robots, did not look like puppets, and did not look like animatronics but were. There was an invisibility of technique,





Photo: Suzanne Tenner

and that's what I was always shooting for."

While *Jurassic Park* was in production, Winston and Karen, his wife of twenty-five years, visited the San Rafael-based Industrial Light and Magic to see firsthand how the computer-generated imagery was progressing. "I have a real pride of ownership when it comes to creating characters for film," he says. "I'd worked closely with ILM on *Terminator* 2 with Jim Cameron, and now *Jurassic Park* with Steven. Both of these projects involved characters that we had created and I'd designed here in the studio, and then the culmination of those characters went away from me to this other tool, the computer. When I left ILM after that visit, Karen and I looked at each other and I said, 'I Gotta do this. I have to get involved in the computers or I'm going to end up being a dinosaur.' This is a new tool. This is something to embrace."

At the same time that Winston was putting the necessary components in place to start a computer graphics (CG) unit at Stan Winston Studio, director Jim Cameron and Scott Ross, the former head of ILM, were having preliminary talks about doing the same thing. "Jim got wind that I was starting a CG company and he contacted me," Winston explains. "Although he has been an auteur of probably some of the greatest effects movies of all time, he didn't really want to get into the effects business. I just wanted to maintain a certain control of my characters; I didn't want to do anything big like ILM. So, we sat down and talked, and it was basically Jim saying, why don't we do this together and do it big. Well, my initial response was two-fold. It was a double-edged sword. Part of it was, well, that's neat; part of it was, I've never been in business with anybody else. Stan Winston Studio is Stan Winston Studio, the beginning and end of it. But another part of me said, if there was a person that I have been in business with, and that I have been successful with, and whose work has made my work better, it was Jim Cameron. *Terminator*, *Aliens*, *Terminator* 2—we've been through it all together."

In 1993, Winston, Cameron and Ross joined forces with IBM and started Digital Domain, the second largest visual effects and digital production studio in the world. "There were a lot of nay-sayers who said you couldn't start a big company like this," Winston says. "So, here we were a start-up company, and the first two movies out of our pipeline were *True Lies*, which was Jim's film, and *Interview with the Vampire*. For the Oscars, they start out with two hundred and fifty films and it's narrowed down to seven that have a possibility of being nominated. Two of the seven were the first two films Digital Domain did, and *True Lies* ended up with a nomination, which is quite an accomplishment for the first year out. I'm very proud of it."

While Ross runs the day-to-day operations of Digital Domain, Winston spends time at the Venice-based facility only to give his creative input when artistic decisions are being made. "I run Stan Winston Studio; Scott runs Digital Domain," Winston says. "We're two separate companies, but now it's a joy for me because I can see my characters through to fruition. There is this wonderful symbiosis, a seamless melding of tools and techniques to create fantasy characters for film, which is what I'm about. If there was a weakness with the other computer companies, it's not having a strong character department. If there was one thing that gives Digital Domain the edge as a computer company, it would be Stan Winston Studio."

Digital Domain's next project is Universal Pictures' upcoming motion picture *Apollo 13*, about three *Apollo* astronauts who find themselves adrift in space, without power or guidance systems, for three days. The effects firm was also briefly attached to TriStar's mega monster epic *Godzilla*, but that project is currently on hold.

Taken at once, Winston's achievements are overwhelming: two children, a lasting marriage, two large companies, the respect and recognition of his peers. Someone feverish with drive would be lucky to have achieved half of what he has. When pressed, he attributes his success to luck. "I've always looked at the world through rose-colored glasses," he says with a note of wonder in his voice, as though his accomplishments come as much of a surprise to him as anyone. "I was very happy in my little world of magic and puppets, and oftentimes I was told, fine, but it's time you spent some time on what you're supposed to be thinking and what you're supposed to be doing. I do what I do because I love it and not because of a drive to be successful. I think I'm very blessed that I have that attitude and, obviously, that I have a



More Winston witchcraft (left, above), for James Cameron's Aliens. *The magic doesn't stop there. Jeff Kober (left, below), rigged up by Winston and crew for his role as Booga, and sweetheart Tank Girl (Lori Petti). Amy (above), Winston's lovable female adolescent mountain gorilla created for* Congo.

good eye. The things I think are neat other people think are neat. There are a lot of people who think things are neat that other people don't think are neat. They're not as lucky as I am. I hit on it. If I trust my instincts, if I think something looks real, if I think it's neat and fun, then I'm going with what I think. I know from my history that this works."

Winston is reluctant to discuss future projects unless they're realities, but his excitement over possible future projects is palpable. "There are about four enormous projects that we are in the development stages on, that Stan Winston Studio has actually been paid to develop and design characters for," he says. "Whether or not these movies become greenlit and actually become realities is yet to be seen, but we are presently designing all the characters for *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, which is a classic film. We're also designing apes for *Planet of the Apes*. These are enormous movies. But right now they're all in the development stages and possibilities. The reality is we're finishing *Congo*."

Winston is also in talks to possibly direct the remake of *Forbidden Planet*. He first made the leap to directing features with *Pumpkinhead* in 1988, and *The Adventures of a Gnome Named Gnorm*, a comedic fantasy adventure that was released straight to video in 1994. A four-foot high model of Gnorm grins impishly directly behind Winston in the gallery room. "Gnorm is a great character," he says. "He's got a great heart. He's also a little tough, and he's also a little mischievous. He's something that is pretty much me. He's my favorite."

Winston's early wish to be an actor has, in a way, come true for him. Through his characters, Winston experiences what most of us only dream about. "Acting is not something I miss because it's something I do on a daily basis, whether it's helping to bring the performance to the characters that we bring to the screen or just me going on a set and acting like a fool," he says with a laugh. "Even though there are so many people involved in each of these characters, I'll let my ego fly for a second and go, that's me up there on screen. And it's not. It's all these other people. But I pretend."

Between projects Winston simply enjoys the life he's made for himself, working out in the on-site gym, dreaming and designing. His daughter, Debbie, who recently graduated from the University of Arizona, designs jewelry at the studio. His son, who is an actor and comedian, sometimes reads scripts for him. "I just look forward to neat scripts and just continuing to do what I do every day," Winston says. "I look forward to more days like today. You can't ask for more than what I have. There would be something wrong if I sat back and said, well, this is fine, but you know what I really wish, if I could really have my dreams come true… I mean, my dreams have come true tenfold. So, I just stay healthy and watch all the creative people around me keep doing it." □

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just been enormous, way above and beyond any issue of money—I expect, in fact, that he may have lost money on this project, given the time and care he lavished on it; we talked for hours on the phone about the most minute details of the design. He approached this project as an artist; he really gave it his all."

It is primarily the transformation effects that are handled digitally (Sil is not, as we have mistakenly reported in past issues, an all-digital creation). "When it came to choosing a digital house, we shopped around every place, and Richard Edlund stood out by his own enthusiasm for movie making, and for our film and what he could do within it. When we talked with him, it was about movie making; his passion for film and for his own work is just so obvious—when he speaks about it, his eyes light up. So there was never ever any doubt that this is the man we wanted to work with."

The final creature was built, and often operated, by Steve Johnson's XFX studios, but Donaldson remains mum about this aspect of the film. "You'll understand that I don't want to speak about what it looks like," Donaldson says. "But what we have is very different from the Alien."

As he approaches the end of his first genre effort, Donaldson is of two minds as to whether he will pursue similar projects in the future. "When you deal with effects, you have no control, as even the greatest experts in the field are only learning what is now possible—and at the same time you have total control, because every bit of it is man-made. And everything happens at a very slow rate, so you can't suddenly abandon your approach to try another way, it all has to be approached with careful and elaborate planning—at the beginning of the movie, you decide what that shot is going to be, and a year later you are still planning that same shot. That's the most nerve-racking part of it, approaching the delivery of that shot and hoping upon hope that it will deliver exactly what you want and need.

"And the effects take such a tremendous amount of time, that I'm now several weeks behind where I'd be in cutting any other type of feature. But we're finally very close to having the picture locked down, with low-resolution versions of the effects in place.

"As a filmmaker, you always feel it would be great if you could make three or four pictures a year and follow up on every interest you have. On the other hand, it's great to get into a project where you know you are doing something unique. When James Cameron did T2, he totally opened up the whole world's eyes to what digital imagery can be. After spending a year and a half being educated in that area, you acquire a very strong desire to use what you've learned." □

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LANGOLIERS

Continued from page 57

it was the airport that Steve wrote into the story. And again, because we actually used a real plane as a set—all of those nuances proved to be valuable. I did catch a lot of grief at first from the cast, in terms of how we could expect to work in a place like that."

Rubinstein acknowledges the difference of appeal between *The Langoliers* and last year's huge television hit, but makes no apologies for refusing to carbon-copy past success. "*The Stand* had more of a social underbelly to it. Although it shares that quality of real people in unreal situations, in this case, it's much lighter. We're asking everybody to suspend their disbelief and get on the roller coaster. Steve's built the tracks. Tom built the car. We've got everything populated with characters that you can identify with. And, as Steve said to me, 'This movie builds like a house a-fire.' In the beginning, everything appears hunky-dory, normal. Looks like a normal flight to Boston that night. And then at two minutes and forty-three seconds in—or whatever it is—the blank hits the fan and we're on the roller coaster."

With three successful ABC miniseries in as many years, it becomes reasonable to expect the Stephen King roller coaster to continue its annual appearance, as Rubinstein confirms. "As you know, Steve is rather prolific. I've read three years ahead, so I can say, yes, there are a lot of goodies in the cupboard. As far as our relationship with ABC goes...there was a time when Steve and I said we *weren't* going to do network television—we didn't know how to work in a certain creative environment. But ABC has made Steve about as comfortable as he's ever felt. And he's even got a great relationship with Programs and Practices, which, given some of his hardedged material, is a pretty significant step.

"Theatrically, we're going to shoot *Thinner* this coming summer, as a feature for Paramount. As far as the next television project goes, we haven't come to where we're prepared to say which one it's going to be, but I can tell you for sure, one is coming."

King also has some television originals in development. "As prolific as he is, there's a point where he can't compete with himself with another novel, because his publishers start tearing out their hair. And so, to be able to do original work for television is a nice way to satisfy his need for output without screwing up the business end.

"We've become really comfortable with television, and the chance to create 'event television.' We got off when *The Stand* brought 70 million people together in a focused experience and it became the watercooler conversation the next morning. That was very satisfying, because we know how hard it is to get people to commit any more than a couple of minutes to anything that doesn't interest them." □



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British television has produced some frequently overlooked sci-fi gems.

BY STEVEN PUCHALSKI

MOST OF US HAVE BEEN long acquainted with science fiction television series like *Dr. Who*, *Space 1999* and *U.F.O.* So it should come as no surprise to discover how many British-produced shows have successfully embraced the science fiction genre and brought the cutting edge of the imagination into your living room. Since many of these programs are currently available through home video, let's take a look at a few of these overlooked gems.

I can't imagine a better place to begin than with *The Prisoner* (MPI Home Video), one of the most outrageously subversive stories to ever sneak onto the networks, as well as a watershed for the potential of series science fiction. The recent news that Polygram has purchased ITC Entertainment, with an eye to producing a big-screen version of this ground-breaking 1968 series, makes this a good time to reexamine that legendary show.



The distinctly British sci-fi farce, Red Dwarf *takes place on a mining spaceship millions of years in the future.*

Patrick McGoohan was a major television star in the mid-sixties, thanks to the ITC action series *Danger Man* (broadcast in the U.S. as *Secret Agent*), but his real achievement was when he parlayed that success into the enigmatic seventeen-episode series *The Prisoner*, in which he took on the roles of star, executive producer, and occasional writer/director. It was one of the first television shows to reach cult status, by twisting the established secret agent genre into a Gordian knot of Kafka-esque conspiracies.

The first episode, "Arrival," begins with McGoohan angrily quitting a high security government job, only to awaken and find himself in a serene town known only as the Village. Though outwardly idyllic, McGoohan quickly realizes that this self-contained seaside resort is actually an Orwellian nightmare, complete with an unseen leader known only as Number One, and an ever changing lineup of front men referred to as Number Two. Meanwhile, McGoohan is dubbed Number Six by the other residents, assigned comfy living quarters loaded with surveillance cameras, and has an escape attempt thwarted by a deadly weather balloon (nicknamed Rover), which acts as a surreal guard over the Village perimeter.

Each episode has McGoohan struggling to escape his prison by matching wits with Number Two, whose goal is to learn the reason behind Six's sudden resignation, break his spirit, and turn him into yet another content Village drone. Number Six proves to be a challenge though, despite all their high-tech methods, as McGoohan quickly learns to turn his captors' games back onto themselves.

Some of the more imaginative episodes include "A. B. & C.," in which a mind-controlling drug takes Number Six into a trio of alternate dream realities; "Free For All," a scathing harangue about modern politics, following Number Six's candidacy for the Number Two position; and "The Schizoid Man," in which Six is brainwashed into acting like a wholly different person—and begins to doubt his own identity when he comes face to face with his double. As the series progressed, the plots became even more eccentric, with the sadistic Number Two of "Hammer into Anvil" convinced that Number Six is actually a plant of the Controllers. The absurd spy romp "The Girl Who was Death" takes us on a rare excursion outside the Village, with McGoohan on the trail of a leggy hitwoman.

The two final episodes, "Once Upon a Time" and "Fall Out," pull out all the stops. Pitted against a ruthless Number Two (Leo McKern), Six is given a severe psyche probing and regressed back to his childhood in a battle of wills that most closely resembles a bizarre, off-Broadway experimental drama. And once Number Six survives the Ultimate Test, he's taken into Number One's inner circle of insanity. Within the story, McGoohan manages to concoct a nearly hallucinogenic ode to the strength of the individual. And though this chaotic finale might not be what viewers expected (remember, that

Continued on page 72



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Galactic Empires is a science fiction trading card game. While in command of Sector Headquarters you conquer terrain; deploy bases, ships, crew and special equipment; and cautiously avoid space monsters, hazards and other occurrences. The objective: Eliminate your opponents' Sector HQs, conquering the sector and eventually the galaxy.

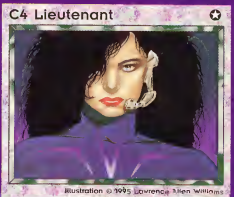
Players choose which empire they will represent: Krebiz, Argonian, Corporation, Mechad, Bolaar, Vektrean, Indirigan, Dragon, Scorpead, Clydon, Tufor, or POJT. More empires will be added to the game on a regular basis through additional expansion sets.

Game Mechanics: Each player uses his own deck of cards (Basic Game allows two players to use one deck). There can be as many or as few cards in the deck as you wish. Each turn consists of applying the output from your terrain to your bases & ships, playing cards from your hand and firing weapons.

The Cards Themselves: Each card is in dazzling full color from an assortment of different artists and illustrators. Each card has the rules needed to operate that ship, system, crew person, etc.

This card game is deceptively simple to learn. Even non-gamers pick it up quickly. More importantly, the game has the strategy of spaceship combat and a fantastic science fiction flair.

Galactic Empires lets you live the science fiction control events in outerspace and experience the Far Side of the galaxy. Every science fiction enthusiast should get this game.



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Illustration: A human lieutenant in Corporate service.

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CHANNEL NEWS

Continued from page 10

varying degrees of computer literacy, the show will offer something for everyone. The latest on cutting edge technology, important information, and insider tips will be handed down to the viewers Wendle calls "techno savvies"—those with a strong understanding of computers and how they work. Plus, *C-Net Central* will provide an interesting, general introduction in plain language to the sometimes intimidating world of computers for "newts," those new-to-technology folks whose technical knowledge ceases with the remote control. News and updates on software, hardware, on-line services, computer games and more will all be featured.

An innovative aspect of *C-Net Central* is its direct link to the Internet. "*C-Net Central* was designed from the ground up with the Internet as its base," says Wendle. The show will have its own Internet area so that viewers at home can make the leap from passive couch potato to active participant in Sci-Fi Channel programming. If you want to know more about a computer issue that you see on an episode of *C-Net Central*, chances are you can access expanded coverage in the share-ware readily available on-line in the program's Internet area.

Each week *C-Net Central* will poll its audience on an issue directly involving technology and its advancement—and naturally, the voting will be done on-line. You can also help chart the course of *C-Net Central*, which extends an invitation to viewers to send mail (electronic or stamped) with comments and ideas for stories.

Regardless of the color of your screen saver, whether you use Mac or PC, and even if you haven't figured out how to program your VCR, *C-Net Central* is your personal technology dictionary. Look it up every Sunday at 10:30 A.M. Eastern Standard Time, 10:30 P.M. EST and 2:30 A.M. EST, on the Sci-Fi Channel! □

JUDGE DREDD

Continued from page 35

inevitable byproduct of the years since the introduction of the series. The original vision of ruthless, unerring justice was presented with a large helping of subtle British irony that could well be lost on today's audience. Polls consistently reveal that Americans view crime as our biggest problem, despite the fact that FBI statistics indicate very little change in crime rates over the last twenty years. As our legislators gear up to answer our own crime problems with a stripped-down, more "efficient" system of justice, *Judge Dredd* may serve the most classic purpose of science fiction to reveal some truth about our present in the light of an imagined future. □

MAY • JUNE PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

DAYTIME

TIME	Monday - Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00	Informational	Informational	Informational
6:30			
7:00	Cartoon Quest: Land of the Lost		
7:30	The Bionic Six		
8:00	Defenders of the Earth		
8:30	New Adventures of Gigantor		
9:00	The Powers of Matthew Star / Time Tunnel	Cartoon Quest: New Adv. Flash Gordon	Sci-Fi Buzz
9:30		Stingray	Mysteries/Magic/Miracles
10:00	Ripley's Believe It or Not	Capt. Scarlet	Inside Space
10:30		Back to the Future	C-Net Central
11:00	Dark Shadows	Land of the Giants	Sci-Fi Trader
11:30	Dark Shadows / Fri: Sci-Fi Trader		One Step Beyond
Noon	Beauty and the Beast	Swamp Thing	Galactica 1980
12:30		Swamp Thing	
1:00	Alfred Hitchcock Presents	Space: 1999	Voyage to the Bottom of Sea
1:30	Beyond Reality		
2:00	Night Gallery	Moonlight Matinee	UFO
2:30	Ray Bradbury Theater		
3:00	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Moonlight Matinee
3:30			
4:00	Voyagers/ Misfits of Science	Radiation Theater	
4:30			Radiation Theater
5:00	The Bionic Woman		
5:30			
6:00	The Six Million Dollar Man	My Secret Identity	
6:30		My Secret Identity	Sci-Fi Trader

EVENING

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone
7:30	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside
8:00	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Sci-Fi Feature	Amazing Stories
8:30						Film	Amazing Stories
9:00	SF Series	SF Series	SF Series	SF Series	SF Series		Sci-Fi Buzz
9:30	Collection*	Collection*	Collection*	Collection*	Collection*		Mysteries/Magic
10:00	Friday 13th: Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	War of the Worlds	Inside Space
10:30							C-Net Central

LATE NIGHT

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:00	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone
11:30	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside
Midnite	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Sci-Fi Feature	Amazing Stories
12:30						Film	Amazing Stories
1:00	SF Series	SF Series	SF Series	SF Series	SF Series		Sci-Fi Buzz
1:30	Collection*	Collection*	Collection*	Collection*	Collection*		Mysteries/Magic
2:00	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	War of the Worlds	Inside Space
2:30							C-Net Central
3:00	Informational	Informational	Informational	Suspense Theater	Retro TV	Radiation Theater	Sci-Fi Trader
3:30							Informational

All programming is in Eastern Standard Time. Please adapt for your local time zone. Titles in red denote original programming. All programming subject to change.
This schedule is effective through June 25, 1995.
Wednesday's Friday the 13th: The Series is preempted at least one week per month for movie theme weeks.
See Sci-Fi Series Collection schedule on the following page.

Not all of our readers are aware that this publication is a mammoth three-state enterprise, from our editorial offices tucked into a cosy office in a bohemian section of downtown New York City, to the lush, carpeted and climate controlled "home office," housing the executive HQ and art department, in lovely Herndon, Virginia, to our printing and subscription fulfillment facilities in Mount Morris, Illinois, a town frequently referred to as "the cultural heartbeat of the nation." And then, of course, there are the offices of the Channel itself, a separate corporate entity overlooking the city in a high-rise office building in New York's midtown.

I say that not all of our readers are aware of this because it's not uncommon for me to download the morning's e-mail and find an occasional subscription inquiry or—more often—a request that I stop showing *Quantum Leap* and put on *V: The Miniseries*. (Hint: send those programming requests to: Programming and Acquisitions, Sci-Fi Channel, 1230 Ave. of the Americas, NY 10020-1513; subscription issues should be addressed to *Sci Fi Entertainment* Circulation, PO Box 709, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0709.)

The vastness of this enterprise sometimes has its curious effects, as it did recently when our April issue reached our subscribers before we received a single issue in our office. And the mail, forwarded to us by the home office, started coming in before we had a chance to sit down with an issue ourselves.

Our nightmare began with the first letter, from Hector Rubinez, Fort Lee, New Jersey:

While it was nice to see Christopher Lambert and Highlander *receive the attention that's been due for so long, your April cover story contained a consistent misspelling. The Highlander's name is Connor MacLeod, not "MacCloud."*

I was suddenly short of breath; my heart seized up in my chest. *MacLeod.* Of course! I *knew* that! I removed my shoe and started hitting myself on the head. Our credibility with fans worldwide was threatened by this sort of thing; I immediately called Tanya Ann Fletcher, the author of the piece, and made her eat dirt for half an hour.

The next letter was a request that I split the network into *two* 24-hour networks, one showing sci-fi, and the other showing only horror. I made a mental note to put this plan into action as soon as I get a chance.

Then, from Laura Eden of Providence, Rhode Island, an appreciation of Robert Martin's essay on *In the Mouth of Madness*, Lovecraft and Carpenter. But about halfway through, it turned ugly:

Marring my enjoyment of the piece was the dawning realization that Mr. Martin had confused the fate of Lovecraft, who succumbed to cancer, with that of Robert E. Howard, who did take his own life. Please take more care with such facts in the future.

The room spun as the gorge rose in my throat. Dark spots welled up before my eyes, until my view was entirely blotted out. When I came to, I was standing over Robert Martin's inert body, a bloody axe in hand.

Luckily, the judge was a Lovecraft fan, and I was immediately released. (I love New York.) I returned to the office, and sent flowers to Martin at St. Vincent's Hospital, with a warning to be back in the office Monday.

I needed some relaxation, a respite from the cares of the day. I decided to cruise the net. As you surely know, *Sci-Fi Entertainment* was the *first* magazine in this field to provide its readers with an Internet e-mail address (Just as we are now the first to debut on the World Wide Web; be sure to visit us in the "Pulp" section of the Channel's new website, at http://www.scifi.com. See this month's Channel News column.). Of course the other magazines sheepishly follow our lead—that doesn't bother me, that's progress, and progress is a good thing. But please remember that we were first!

Anyway, I fired up the modem, tooling onto the old infobahn at the once-startling speed of 14.4 kbps (*modem manufacturers:* write to flixman@dorsai.org to learn how *you* can become the official modem of *Sci-Fi Entertainment* magazine). First stop: e-mail.

The note from Owen Rubin, of Oakland, California began with the praise to which we at *SFE* have become so accustomed. But, as he proceeded to discuss my own column, "Future Shock," it seemed Mr. Rubin was only trying to relax us a bit before he ripped the heart from our chest.

But I think you may be letting the letters go to your head. Has all the praise made the editors and fact checkers and the rest of the staff that proofread your magazine stupid with delight?

What person in the entire U.S. does not know who "the computer zillionaire" really is? Of course, I am talking about the world famous "David Gates!"

David Gates? *David* Gates? I called up the file that contained the text of my "Future Shock" column, and there it was: I had referred to the chairman of Microsoft, the most famous geek the world over, by the wrong name. Bill. It's *Bill*, damn it! And I *knew* that.

My first impulse was to go home, climb in bed, and stay there until 1996. But would that solve anything? Certainly not. I then decided to use this space to reassure our readers that we here at *Sci-Fi Entertainment* are not morons who don't care about such things.

Obviously, we're morons who *do* care.

—Ed Flixman

SCI-FI CHANNEL
SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 1

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2:00 p.m. Frankenstein: The True Story
1973, Horror, James Mason
8:00 p.m. The Guyver
1991, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill
12:00 a.m. The Guyver
1991, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill
3:00 a.m. Death Watch
1982, Science Fiction, Harvey Keitel

SUNDAY, 5/7

3:00 p.m. And the Wall Came Tumbling Down
1984, Mystery, Barbi Benton
4:30 p.m. The Puppet Master, 1989, Horror, Paul LeMat, Irene Miracle

SATURDAY, 5/13

2:00 p.m. House 4
1991, Horror, Terry Treas
4:00 p.m. Xtro 2: The 2nd Encounter
1991, Science Fiction, Jan-Michael Vincent
8:00 p.m. Replikator
1993, Science Fiction, Ned Beatty
12:00 a.m. Replikator
1993, Science Fiction, Ned Beatty
3:00 a.m. Phantom Planet
1961, Science Fiction, Dean Fredericks

SUNDAY, 5/14

12:00 p.m. Psycho 2
1983, Thriller, Anthony Perkins, Vera Miles
2:30 p.m. Psycho 3
1983, Thriller, Anthony Perkins, Vera Miles
4:30 p.m. Replikator
1993, Science Fiction, Ned Beatty

MONDAY, 5/15

9:00 p.m. Demon City Shinjuku, 1995, Anime
1:00 a.m. Demon City Shinjuku, 1995, Anime

TUES, 5/16

9:00 p.m. Lilly C.A.T.
1995, Anime
1:00 a.m. Lilly C.A.T.
1995, Anime

WEDNESDAY, 5/17

9:00 p.m. Casshan: Robot Hunter, 1995, Anime
1:00 a.m. Casshan: Robot Hunter, 1995, Anime

THURSDAY, 5/18

9:00 p.m. 8 MAN AFTER
1995, Anime
1:00 a.m. 8 MAN AFTER
1995, Anime

FRIDAY, 5/19

9:00 p.m. Project A-KO Versus Battle 1 & 2, 1995, Anime
1:00 a.m. Project A-KO Versus Battle 1 & 2, 1995, Anime

SATURDAY, 5/20

2:00 p.m. Horror Planet
1981, Horror, Judy Geeson
4:00 p.m. Replikator
1993, Science Fiction, Ned Beatty
8:00 p.m. Time Runner
1990, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill, Rae Dawn Chong
3:00 a.m. Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living
1963, Schlock, Cash Flagg

SUNDAY, 5/21

3:00 p.m. In Possession
1984, Supernatural, Carol Lynley
4:30 p.m. Time Runner
1990, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill, Rae Dawn Chong

SATURDAY, 5/27

2:00 p.m. The Guyver
1991, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill
4:00 p.m. Time Runner
1990, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill, Rae Dawn Chong
8:00 p.m. Critters 4
1991, Science Fiction, Brad Dourif, Angela Basset
12:00 a.m. Critters 4
1991, Science Fiction, Brad Dourif, Angela Basset
3:00 a.m. The Incredible Shrinking Man
1957, Science Fiction, Grant Williams, Randy Stuart

SUNDAY, 5/28

3:00 p.m. The Incredible Shrinking Man
1957, Science Fiction, Grant Williams, Randy Stuart
5:00 p.m. Tennis Court
1984, Supernatural, Peter Graves

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SATURDAY, 6/3

2:00 p.m. Phase IV, 1974, Science Fiction, Nigel Davenport

4:00 p.m. The Blue Monkey, 1987, Science Fiction, Steve Railsback

8:00 p.m. 3rd Annual Pilot Playhouse—Part I
Science Fiction, various stars

12:00 a.m. 3rd Annual Pilot Playhouse—Part I
Science Fiction, various stars

3:00 a.m. Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai
1984, Science Fiction, Peter Weller

SUNDAY, 6/4

3:00 p.m. The Space Children
1958, Science Fiction, Adam Williams, Peggy Webber

4:30 p.m. The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey
1988, Fantasy, Hamish McFarlane, Bruce Lyons

8:00 p.m. 3rd Annual Pilot Playhouse-Part II
Science Fiction, various stars

12:00 a.m. 3rd Annual Pilot Playhouse-Part II
Science Fiction, various stars

SATURDAY 6/10

2:00 p.m. The Howling
1981, Horror, Dee Wallace

4:00 p.m. The Howling 6: The Freaks, 1990, Horror, Brendan Hughes

8:00 p.m. Deep Red, 1994, Science Fiction, Michael Biehn

12:00 a.m. Deep Red, 1994, Science Fiction, Michael Biehn

3:00 a.m. The Puppet Master
1989, Horror, Paul LeMat

SUNDAY, 6/11

3:00 p.m. The Amazing Colossal Man
1957, Science Fiction, Glenn Langan, Cathy Downs

5:00 p.m. Deep Red, 1994, Science Fiction, Michael Biehn

SATURDAY, 6/17

2:00 p.m. This Island Earth
1955, Science Fiction, Jeff Morrow

4:00 p.m. Deep Red, 1994, Science Fiction, Michael Biehn

8:00 p.m. Abraxas: Guardian of the Universe
1990, Science Fiction, Jesse Ventura, Marjorie Bransfield

12:00 a.m. Abraxas: Guardian of the Universe
1990, Science Fiction, Jesse Ventura, Marjorie Bransfield

3:00 a.m. Ritual of Evil
1969, Supernatural, Anne Baxter, Louis Jourdan

SUNDAY, 6/18

3:00 p.m. War of the Colossal Beast, 1958, Science fiction, Sally Fraser, Roger Pace

4:30 p.m. Phase IV
1974, Science Fiction, Nigel Davenport

MONDAY, 6/19

9:00 p.m. Tobor the Great, 1954, Science Fiction, Charles Drake

1:00 a.m. Tobor the Great, 1954, Science Fiction, Charles Drake

TUESDAY, 6/20

9:00 p.m. Android
1983, Science Fiction, Klaus Kinski, Kendra Kirchner

1:00 a.m. Android
1983, Science Fiction, Klaus Kinski, Kendra Kirchner

WEDNESDAY, 6/21

9:00 p.m. The Colossus of New York, 1958, Science Fiction, John Baragrey

1:00 a.m. The Colossus of New York, 1958, Science Fiction, John Baragrey

THURSDAY, 6/22

9:00 p.m. Short Circuit
1986, Science Fiction, Steve Guttenberg, Ally Sheedy

1:00 a.m. Short Circuit
1986, Science Fiction, Steve Guttenberg, Ally Sheedy

FRIDAY, 6/23

9:00 p.m. Crash and Burn
1990, Science Fiction, Paul Ganus, Megan Ward

1:00 a.m. Crash and Burn
1990, Science Fiction, Paul Ganus, Megan Ward

SATURDAY, 6/24

2:00 p.m. Stowaway to the Moon, 1975, Science Fiction, Lloyd Bridges, Michael Link

4:00 p.m. Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai, 1984, Science Fiction, Peter Weller

8:00 p.m. Dr. Mordrid: Master of the Unknown
1992, Supernatural, Jeffery Combs, Yvette Nipar

12:00 a.m. Dr. Mordrid: Master of the Unknown
1992, Supernatural, Jeffery Combs, Yvette Nipar

3:00 a.m. The Magic Sword
1961, Fantasy, Basil Rathbone

SUNDAY, 6/25

3:00 p.m. Alien Seed
1989, Science Fiction, Eric Estrada, Heidi Paine

5:00 p.m. Time Travelers
1975, Science Fiction, Sam Groom, Tom Hallick

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VIDEOS

Continued from page 66

era's idea of hard-hitting drama was Lassie saving Li'l Timmy from a fire), it still remains two of the most intense hours in all of '60s television.

Though most easily read as a radical allegory about depersonalization and rebellion in modern society, at its core this show has contempt for authority in every form, in addition to redefining the entire nature of imprisonment. But amidst all these weighty issues, let's not ignore the fact that this is also a corker of a yarn, which follows our indomitable hero through a series of surprisingly cerebral adventures. It also benefits greatly from its fondness for disorienting sets and mod props (including extensive use of Lava Lamps) while making wonderful use of the sumptuous Hotel Portmeirion in North Wales for its exteriors. Best of all, this paranoia-lover's delight is as daringly original as it was during its first run, even by today's jaded standards. It's essential viewing.

In a more comic vein, we move onto *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Fox Video) based on Douglas Adam's beloved BBC-radio series and novel. Though fans of Adams' work will undoubtedly be skeptical at the notion of turning this intergalactic odyssey into a three-hour miniseries for the small screen, it triumphs by capturing all the charm and wise-ass humor of the source material.

Our tale follows average Earth resident Arthur Dent (Simon Jones), whose house is being bulldozed in order to make way for a bypass. And if that isn't bad enough news, the entire Planet Earth is about to be destroyed by aliens in order to make room for their own hyper-space express route. Luckily, "Ape Descendent" Dent is saved (unlike the rest of us poor blokes, who are turned to dust in a blink of an eye) by his eccentric neighbor Ford Prefect, who is actually an alien researcher for the latest edition of the *Hitchhiker's Guide* (the repository of all the galaxy's knowledge—accurate or not). And moments before the Earth is vaporized, the bathrobed Dent is whisked away on a hilarious journey across time and space.

With a Babel Fish in his ear and a trusty towel in hand, Dent and Prefect hitchhike their way across the spiral arm and onto a stolen spaceship manned by the three-armed, two-headed Zaphod Beeblebrox, a manic-depressive robot named Marvin, and Trillian, the requisite blonde space babe with a universe of cleavage. Using their stolen Infinite Improbability Drive, this gaggle of goofballs are tortured by Vogon poetry, get a front row seat to the loudest rock band in the universe, visit the restaurant at the end of the universe, and finally learn that the entire Planet Earth was actually created by...White Mice.

The production design is genuinely sumptuous by BBC standards (watch an old *Dr. Who* and you'll get the idea), but still, they

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could've spent a bit more cash in some departments, like for Zaphod's limp animatronic second head. Nonetheless, the show's willingness to digress into the most absurd details and flashbacks keeps our minds off the budget limitations. Best of all is the visualization of the *Guide* itself. Using animated graphics and rambling narration, the information flies past the viewer so fast you'll need to rewind to catch all the ingenious jokes. Overflowing with ever-more bizarre subplots and various bits of alien business, the result is a lightweight, but very witty miniseries, laced with a decidedly Monty Pythonesque sense of the absurd.

Those unfamiliar with Adams' work might think this is just a space sitcom, but its strength lies in an ability to turn every SF cliché on its ear, while lovingly embracing the entire genre. Diehard fans might balk at some of its cost-cutting turns and plot compressions, but overall, this is a fine evocation of Adams' twisted sense of humor.

If *Hitchhiker's Guide* is the science fiction equivalent of *Monty Python*, then *Red Dwarf* (Fox Video) is more akin to *The Young Ones* in space. Written by Rob Grant and Doug Naylor, this BBC production is a flat-out space farce, full of sledgehammer jokes and generic lunacy.

The pilot episode, "The End," takes us to an immense, highly populated mining spaceship named *Red Dwarf*, and there we meet Dave Lister (Craig Charles), a slob technician who was sentenced to eighteen months in suspended animation for an infraction of the ship's rules. But a disaster on the ship leaves him to rot for three million years, after which he awakens to an empty ship and the possibility of being the last human being in the universe. His only companions include a holographic reproduction of Rimmer, his anal retentive ex-partner; a blockheaded service mechanoid named Kryten; and a funky humanoid fashion plate that turns out to be the evolutionary offspring of Lister's pregnant pet cat.

Over the course of the eight ninety-minute videotapes thus far released, this cast of misfits endure a barrage of wacky misadventures involving every imaginable SF phenomenon—from genetic, time slides, intergalactic penal colonies and white holes, to a visit to a parallel universe featuring a pregnant Lister. And though the science is a little soft at times, it's their demented storytelling and likable working class sensibility that makes it so lovably warped. How can you not like an episode like "Meltdown," which somehow manages to pack Hitler, Caligula, Elvis and Stan Laurel into a simple half hour?

More serious-minded SF fans will cringe at its tendency toward sophomoric humor, not to mention the occasional urine or necrophilia gag. And though the special effects won't be winning any awards, they're simple yet effective, with detailed model work and the occasional chintzy monster. □

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Once there was a time, not so very long ago, before the stars had names...

BY LAWRENCE TUCKER

BING CROSBY, SO THE LEGEND GOES, used to have a sign on his front lawn. "Keep off the grass," it pleaded. "Remember when you too were struggling for recognition." *Opening Shots* by Damien Bona (Workman Publishing, 405 pp, $11.95 P.B.) focuses on seventy Hollywood stars, from Woody Allen to Pia Zadora, in the days when they too were struggling for recognition. By describing, in detail, the often atrocious movies and puny parts in which they made their debuts, it reminds us that, hell, *everybody's* gotta start somewhere, even Hollywood royalty. It's a pretty comforting notion.

Only the press treats stars like royalty; to us they're more like family—that's how intimately we feel we know them (even when, of course, we don't know them at all). Seeing photos of them at the dawn of their careers, when they were hungry, young, and vulnerable, is a little like seeing snapshots of Mom and Dad when they were kids; we smile, marvel, shake our heads, and realize that they're human after all.



Opening Shots *reminds readers that two years before starring as Ripley (seen here in* Alien 3*), Sigourney Weaver made her film debut in Woody Allen's* Annie Hall.

It's that pleasing recognition—and the amusing minutiae of filmmaking—that makes this book so irresistible. Those of us who cherish memories of Sigourney Weaver battling an Alien to the death, for example, will be surprised to learn that just two years before, this strong-jawed superwoman made her screen debut in a non-speaking role as Woody Allen's date in *Annie Hall*. (Needless to say, she towered over the star.) And long before he offered strangers a friendly box of chocolates as Forrest Gump, Tom Hanks was asking "Want a Goober?" in *He Knows You're Alone*, a low-budget slasher movie shot on Staten Island. Luckily, in this maiden voyage, Hanks was neither the killer nor the victim.

Name changes, the book makes clear, are the order of the day among aspiring actors: Sigourney Weaver was once merely Susan, Meryl Streep was plain Mary Louise, Jack Palance was born Walter Palahnuik, Gregory Peck was originally Eldred Gregory Peck, and literally four people in the book dropped the family name Horowitz in their pursuit of stardom: one of them was Winona Ryder and three of them were Stooges.

The book is filled with such surprises. Did you know, for example, that as a high schooler, James Dean was the 1949 state debating champion of Iowa? Or that Cloris Leachman, who looked so ghastly in *Young Frankenstein*, was once a Miss America finalist? (She made an unforgettable screen debut, naked beneath a trenchcoat in the brutal Mike Hammer mystery *Kiss Me Deadly*, ending up as the movie's first corpse.) Or that Jodie Foster supplied the voice of Pugsley in the Saturday-morning cartoon version of *The Addams Family*, and starred, at age three, in a Coppertone suntan lotion commercial? "Foster's first appearance on film," Bona reports, "consisted of having her panties pulled down by a dog."

Full-page photos are plentiful, including a lissome sixteen-year-old Melanie Griffith in *Night Moves*; Ethan Hawke and River Phoenix as boyhood pals in the underrated Joe Dante sci-fi film *Explorers*; and a cherubic Pia Zadora as a space-tot, complete with antennae, in *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*. The book, in fact, is as heavily art-directed as a popular magazine, its pages enlivened by sidebars, subheads, decorations, trivia lists, a variety of type styles, and, in the margins, artfully tilted smaller photos backed by bands of shadow. In one such shot, a young Anthony Perkins stands in a shower stall kissing an even younger Jane Fonda—both of them fully clothed—in Fonda's first film, *Tall Story*. "The next time that Tony Perkins got into a shower with an actress," Bona notes, "it was with Janet Leigh, and she ended up with much more than a smooch."

It becomes clear very quickly that Bona is something of a wise guy—but he's good at it. Writing of Barbara Hershey's brief but well-publicized change of name to "Barbara Seagull" to honor the spirit of a sea gull she'd accidentally killed filming *Last Summer*, Bona muses, "At least it wasn't a sperm whale that got killed."

He's equally acute as a critic and wastes no false praise on actors or films he dislikes. "*The Stepford Wives*," he

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argues, "might have made a diverting episode of *The Twilight Zone*, but stretched to two hours it wears pretty thin." He admires Richard Gere's debut as a Times Square pimp in *Report to the Commissioner*, but is unimpressed with the star—"The baby-faced [Michael] Moriarty portrays the most naive cop in the history of the NYPD, delivering his Dead End Kid accent in such a laid-back manner that he seems either stoned or catatonic"—and he trashes Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky* as "shoddy," "maudlin," and "third-rate." (This was not, of course, Stallone's first feature; as a photo reminds us, the actor, in a leather jacket and sideburns, was one of a gang who molested a crippled old lady on the subway in Woody Allen's classic comedy *Bananas*.)

Jeff Goldblum also started out as part of a New York City gang, but hardly for laughs. Identified only as "Freak Number 1," he was one of the trio that raped Charles Bronson's daughter and murdered his wife in *Death Wish*. (The gang, of course, was carefully interracial, as gangs must be in the politically correct dream-world of Hollywood—unless, as in *The Fisher King*, the thugs terrorizing the city are depicted as a gang of blond preppies.)

When it comes to a versatile star like Donald Sutherland (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers, The Puppet Masters)*, it's interesting to learn that his roots in horror are long; he got his start playing both a lawman and an old hag in the cheesy European *Castle of the Living Dead*, before going on to *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors*. Ironically, Vincent Price seemed destined for more refined things; in his debut film, *Service De Luxe*, he was touted as "Broadway's latest romantic idol."

Bona has done his homework—except in one disappointing respect. He comes up with witty and often revealing quotes for the people he profiles (such as Susan Sarandon remarking, "I attended Catholic University, and it was certainly the way to become a lapsed Catholic"), but they're always taken from other sources, other writers' interviews. He himself doesn't seem to have picked up the phone and spoken with any of his stars. Speculating about Debra Winger, who made her debut in a sleazy soft-core porn film called *Slumber Party '57*, he writes, "I realize we should walk a mile in another person's shoes—in the film Winger's are saddle oxfords—before we criticize...but what *was* she thinking?" Well, Damien, why not *ask* her, instead of wondering about it in print?

Hollywood Cauldron: Thirteen Horror Films from the Genre's Golden Age by Gregory William Mank (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 424 pp., $37.50).

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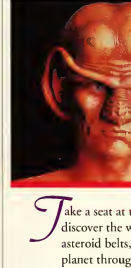
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He has one virtue that's less common in genre historians than you might suppose: he's extremely kind and never bitchy—kind not just to the films he loves but to the people who made them, from Boris Karloff, about whom he's written in the past (*Karloff and Lugosi*, also published by McFarland), to Hurd Hatfield, Hollywood's first Dorian Gray, who comes across here as likeable and self-effacing. (The book quotes a hilariously bone-headed line from *Variety*'s review of that film, arguing that Hatfield "should have been aged a little toward the end.") And Mank possesses another virtue that's even rarer: he writes extremely well. A lot of this book—perhaps, if you've seen the films, a bit *too* much—is taken up with narrating the plots of the individual movies; but Mank manages to work in extensive background material, providing glimpses of the day-to-day shooting, the stars' private lives, studio finances, Hollywood gossip, and the films' eventual critical reception.

Mank is especially sympathetic to Laird Cregar, the tormented, extravagantly ambitious 6-foot 3 inches heavyweight star of the florid melodramas *The Lodger* and *Hangover Square*. It's widely known that Cregar died of a heart attack shortly after filming *Square*, and that his death was brought on by crash dieting; he had dropped more than 100 pounds in an attempt to turn himself from a near-300-pound self-described "grotesque" into a svelte leading man. Most authorities (including Katz and Thomson, whose encyclopedias I have previously reviewed in this column) report Cregar's age at death as 28, but Mank has tracked down the birth certificate and reveals that the star was actually three years older than he liked to pretend.

Another colorful character that comes back to life in these pages is the legendary cad George Sanders, who made life a living hell for directors and who once remarked, "The only thing that keeps me from killing half the people in Hollywood is the thought of being jailed." In the end, of course, he killed himself, leaving a famous suicide note that Mank quotes in its entirety: "Dear World: I am leaving because I am bored. I feel I have lived long enough. I am leaving you with your worries in this sweet cesspool—Good luck." □



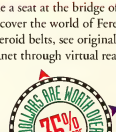
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From Panel to Screen

By Berthe Roegger

NEVER BEFORE has any film season seen so many major motion pictures adapted from the comic page; and it's an exceptionally diverse group, from the blandly wholesome comic adventures of *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, to the casual, post-mod anarchism of *Tank Girl*; from the ruthless lawman *Judge Dredd* to the tempered vigilantism of *Batman*. This time out, we test your knowledge of the comic book personae who will be gracing the summer screen.



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Rambo battles the Judge in the Fleetway comic. Now Stallone plays his former adversary in the upcoming film, Judge Dredd. *Brian Bolland is the artist of this comic panel.*

1. What is Judge Dredd's first name?
2. Who are the two creators of *Tank Girl*?
3. Name the first published appearance of Batman.
4. Who first conceived *Casper*, and for what purpose?
5. One of Judge Dredd's greatest early battles was against another Judge. Name him.
6. What was the fate of "Rambo," a Sylvester Stallone look-alike who once tangled with Judge Dredd?
7. What allows Tank Girl's adventures to occur in any time period?
8. What notable characters were introduced in *Batman* #1?
9. What was unique about *Judge Dredd*'s first appearance under DC Comics' logo?
10. Five men have fought crime in a Batman costume. Name them.
11. Where did *Tank Girl* first appear in print?
12. What famed American accompanied Tank Girl on a cross-country spree of murder and robbery?
13. What *Judge Dredd* artist has also drawn *Tank Girl*?
14. Who was Batman's first love interest?
15. There was a *Tank Girl* comic story similar to the plot of the film, but the liquid wasn't water. What was it?
16. Batman has had some rough times in recent years, including a debilitating back injury, received at the hands of which foe?
17. Both the film and comic book set Judge Dredd's career around 2010; but the *Judge Dredd* trailer places the action in what wrong year?
18. What is Tank Girl's name?
19. How was *Casper* introduced to the public?
20. Not all of Tank Girl's pals appeared in the film; other than Booga, name her four closest friends.
21. When Batman defeats his foes, they are inevitably hauled off to one of two Gotham institutions; name them.
22. Why is the number 23 used repeatedly in *Tank Girl*?

ANSWERS:

1. Joe. 2. Jamie Hewlett and Alan Martin. 3. Detective Comics #27, May 1939. 4. Joe Oriolo, for a children's book co-written with Sy Reit but never published. 5. Judge Death. 6. Did time in the Iso-Cube for the kidnapping and attempted murder of Judge Dredd. 7. There are at least two acceptable answers: a) the whim of Hewlett and Martin, or b) because she allowed her grandmother to die, choosing instead to hog a time portal for herself. 8. The Joker and Catwoman. 9. It was a team-up with Batman. 10. Thomas Wayne (Bruce's dad foiled a robbery while wearing Halloween garb), Bruce Wayne, Alfred Pennyworth, Jean-Paul Valley, and Dick Grayson. 11. In UK's *Deadline* magazine. 12. Writer Jack Kerouac, in "The Blue Helmet by Jack Kerouac." 13. Simon Bisley painted *Tank Girl* for the cover of *Deadline* #8. 14. Actress Julie Madison. 15. Beer, in "The Australian Job." 16. The Latino mastermind named Bane. 17. The wrong answer is: 2205. 18. If she was being truthful, Marcie Brown, though her grandparents are the Shenanigans. 19. In a popular Paramount cartoon, *The Friendly Ghost*. 20. Jet Girl (flies a jet), Sub Girl (drives a sub), Barney (insane), Steve (degenerate hippie). 21. Blackgate Prison and Arkham Asylum. 22. A reference to the anarchist Discordians, who regard 23 as a sacred number.

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Dear Ed,

I was very excited when I read in your magazine that *Dr. Who* might return to TV. I have been a long-time fan and am looking forward to the pilot episode. By the way, who will be playing the Doctor? Will he regenerate, or will Sylvester McCoy continue in the role? I hope that he at least makes an appearance in the pilot. I just recently had the opportunity to view a few of the programs with him playing the Doctor and I really enjoyed them (No stations play *Dr. Who* in my area). By the way, I really enjoy the format of your magazine. Keep up the good work.

Shon Hargis
Bolivar, MO

Fox Television has decided to pass on Dr. Who, *at least for the time being. Amblin' Television and the BBC remain committed to the collaborative project, which is again seeking a network home.*

Dear Editor,

Will we be seeing *Babylon 5* in *Sci-Fi-Entertainment* Mag? *Trek* is good, but we are overrun with info on it.

Does the Sci-Fi Channel have an Internet site yet, either FTP or WWW or anything??? I won't use Prodigy or AOL

Chuck Geise
geise005@maroon.tc.umn.edu

You're right, we're overdue for a repeat visit with the creative folk behind B5; *we plan to do something about that soon. The Sci-Fi Channel's web site is up and running at http://www.scifi.com... Be sure to leave us a note on the B-board so we'll know you made it there.*

Dear Flixman,

First, I would like to second your comments about making films from video games when there are so many good novels which could be adapted to the big screen! I would also like to inquire as to what you might know about upcoming films in the medieval fantasy genre. Are any on the horizon? Is Arnold's *Crusade* really dead? What was the storyline? Moreover, any news on the *Aliens 4* front? Will it be an invasion of Earth? I recently saw *Highlander 3* and was relieved that *Highlander 2* was ignored, yet thought that the plot of the most recent film created more questions than it answered—the story, on the whole was not very tight.

Sincerely yours,
Michael Pavkovic
Honolulu, HI

There's suddenly a great deal of chivalric fantasy and drama arriving on screen; Mel Gibson *is both star and director of* Braveheart, *opening*



Tom Baker, one of "The Five Doctors," in the Dr. Who 30th Anniversary *special.*

May 26th; while the Arthurian tale First Knight *and an adaptation of the classic* Rob Roy *are scheduled for release later this year. Coverage of all three films can be found in the June issue of* Realms of Fantasy, *now on sale. Paramount's elaborate fantasy* Dragonheart *is in the works for release in early 1996.* Crusade *is far from dead; Schwarzenegger now owns the property as part of his contractual settlement; director Paul Verhoeven is also still involved; the expensive project may wind up as a coproduction among two major studios. Meanwhile, Schwarzenegger will probably proceed with* Eraser, *a thriller from director Chuck (*The Mask*) Russell, concerning the Federal Witness Protection program and a government conspiracy. Other films that are Arnold's if he wants them are:* Sgt. Rock, *from the DC Comic;* Return of the Apes, *a project only dimly related to* The Planet of the Apes; *and an "untitled Ivan Reitman project," which we strongly suspect to be* Doom, *based upon the popular computer game.*

Mr. Flixman,

I think your reply to Carolyn Lynn was rather rude. She was simply pointing out that you had slighted a fine actor, John Kapelos, by omitting his name from your article on *Forever Knight* (February 1995).

Dawn Shaefer
Pensacola, FL

Could you please take another look at the letter and our reply? We think you missed our point, and here we'd like to be a bit more serious about the subject matter of this month's editorial.

To err is human, and human errors in a publication are not "disturbingly biased, unprofessional and grossly unfair," (Carolyn's words) provided that they are acknowledged *and* corrected. *Everyone here at SFE has worked for other publications that have shown far less integrity in this regard, letting errors simply "blow over." To say that Carolyn was "unduly harsh" (our words) was neither extreme nor rude.*

Forever Knight *fans will be pleased to know that another season for the show is looking very likely right now, though you may find the program at a different point on the channel dial. We expect to have details on this in the next issue.*

Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment,

I heard that William Shatner is working on a *Star Trek* novel. Is this true? What can you tell us about it?

Mark Fuller
Westchester, NY

Ashes of Eden, *Shatner's first* Star Trek *novel, will be on the shelves—and no doubt at the top of the bestseller lists—around the time that this issue hits the stands. Set about six months prior to Kirk's appearance in the* Generations *film, it concerns Kirk's attempts to build peace with those crafty Klingons.*

Dear Editors:

Why no word from you on *Screamers*, the new Philip K. Dick film?

Thomas Rose
Baltimore, MD

*An oversight! Screenwriter Dan O'Bannon (*Alien, Dark Star*) has been in development with this for over a decade, and we're happy that Tristar finally followed through. The storyline concerns an isolated mining colony on a distant planet that is threatened with eradication by robots that can re-create themselves, improving their efficiency with each generation. It's based on Dick's story "Second Variety." Peter Weller and Jennifer Rubin star.*

Dear SFE,

Hallelujah! The SciFi Channel just reached us here in New York! Life is good.

One thing, though. No *Planet of the Apes*. I've been waiting for years to see the TV series again—is it coming back to the Channel?

I read about a *Twilight Zone* marathon in your magazine a couple of months ago, how about another for those of us who missed the first one?

Henry deWitt
Brooklyn, NY

Planet of the Apes *is part of the "Collector's Edition Series," shown in regular rotation; expect to see it again in late summer. The next* TZ *marathon is scheduled for July 3 and 4; the second day will be devoted to the eighteen seldom-seen one-hour episodes of the original series.*

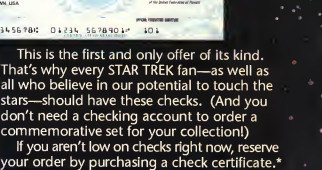
Send e-mail to flixman@dorsai.org, including name and city if you'd like it published; paper mail goes to Sci-Fi Entertainment Letters, 441 Carlisle Dr., Herndon, VA 22070.

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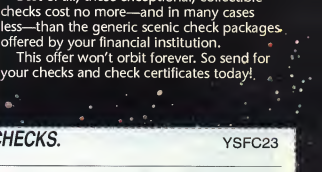


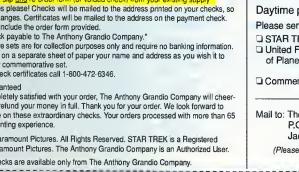


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